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ME AND MY

RUSSIAN WIFE

by EDDY GILMORE

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For **MY MOTHER** and **MY WIFE**

and the wonderful people of my hometown,

Selma, Alabama

ME AND MY RUSSIAN WIFE

I am not a profound man and this is not a profound book. It contains little gloom and doom and precious little pontification. I am also no Russian expert. A Russian expert is someone who has been in the Soviet Union less than two weeks or more than twenty years. I don't qualify for I was there but eleven years and nine months.

However, in being there all that time I did see and hear a lot of things and it is on the basis of being there and hearing and seeing things and reporting them for the Associated Press that I write this book.

Sometimes I was sure I wrote for the smallest audience in the world—that handful of censors who sat there with their blue pencils and ripped my cablegrams apart and often my journalistic heart. Because of the extremely difficult censorship that existed and still exists in the U.S.S.R., I am getting many of the things in this book to the public for the very first time.

I kept a lot of notes in Russia and I spent a lot of time and considerable effort in getting them out of the country. I rely on them throughout the various chapters.

I knew and talked with hundreds of people in Russia and I use a number of direct quotations in reporting what they said to me and what I said to them and what they said to other people. It would be extremely silly of me to say that I took notes and recorded every conversation. Of course I didn't.

The conversations are as I remember them. I believe I am a good enough reporter to have retained the sense of their content.

I should also point out that I am not a very romantic-looking fellow, but I certainly managed to get myself mixed up in a lot of romance in Russia.

Life is a very wonderful thing to me and I love living it. However, if I run down tonight I know that the world doesn't owe me anything. This is largely because of some very full and splendid years that I have spent with my wife, Tamara. A great Russian if I ever knew one.

And finally, the longer I lived in the Soviet Union the less I realized I knew about what is called Communism. I still don't know what it means. It was state capitalism to me, rigidly and brutally enforced by the secret police.

Above all, I profess to know very few of the answers about Russia or anything else. I hope this book is reportage for that is what I am, a reporter.

1

It began with a telephone call, and Russia was certainly far from my thoughts that early morning in late June in old, bomb-blasted Chelsea, London, where I was living in 1941.

The double ring of the British telephone summoned me from a deep sleep. The voice on the instrument was unmistakable. The voice of a White Russian girl I had known for a couple of months.

"Gitler's soobmorines," she said in that lush, sad tone I was to hear too many times later in the Soviet Union, "Gitler's soobmorines ess drobbink torpadoes all ovair leedle Mudda Rooshia. You muss ged opp."

I always thought she affected this accent, but affected or not, it was effective. Especially at 6:00 A.M. British Double Summertime.

"What are you doing drinking vodka at this time of the

night?" I asked, for in those days the first thing I ever associated with any Russian was vodka drinking.

"I emm not dronk," she said, "and you bedda leesen to me. You bedda get opp for de varr ess on and leedle Mudda Rooshia bleeds from de boms."

After a lot of questions from me and some of the strangest answers imaginable from her, I finally realized that Hitler had, at last, marched against Stalin. At least, I realized that Natasha thought so.

I hung up the receiver and then telephoned the Associated Press office, on Fleet Street, in the Press Association Building. Natasha was right. The war was on. I lay back in bed and shut my eyes.

"Now," I said to myself in one of the very few correct predictions I ever made about anything, "Hitler has lost the war."

I quite naturally followed the course of the fighting in the papers and on the maps that were spotted with such strange-sounding names. Minsk. Pinsk. Smolensk. But I began to follow it very much more personally after Robert Bunnelle, the AP's chief of bureau (and one of the best) in London, handed me this terse cablegram from our New York office:

SUGGEST GILMORE APPLY SOONEST SOVIET EMBASSY FOR ENTRY VISA MOSCOW JOIN CASSIDY TAKING QUICKEST ROUTE REGARDS GOODLUCK KENPER.

Cassidy was Henry Cassidy, that alert and charming fellow who was covering the U.S.S.R. for the Associated Press, and with whom I was later to have so many pleasant associations. Kenper was Kent Cooper, the great and visionary general manager of the AP.

"Me, Russia?" I asked.

"Yes, you Russia," said Bunnelle.

"Hell, man," I told him, "I don't know anything about Russia."

"Who does?" asked Bob, and he never said a wiser thing.

Russia. Mother Russia. Dark, Communistic Russia. The underbelly and the overbelly of the world. Tolstoy and Dostoevsky and Gogol and Pushkin and Chekov. A faraway, faraway land. Fur caps and vodka fumes. Natasha and gray, hungry wolves, bounding across the snowy steppe, the icicles rattling on their hides as they ran. Troikas and samovars and old Red Square and St. Basil's Cathedral and Uncle Joe Stalin and the secret police. Dialectic materialism and Karl Marx. And Gilmore, a country boy from Alabama, skyrocketed into the midst of all this.

I didn't want to go, but I'd never ducked a newspaper assignment yet. I went. Went to the Soviet Embassy in London and was told at some length that the Ambassador couldn't see me, either today, tomorrow, or any time, and that one didn't get visas from embassies but from consulates. I should mention that at neither the Soviet Embassy nor the Soviet Consulate was I exactly greeted as if I were Barclay de Tolly, a foreigner ready and willing to help the Russians drive another foreigner across the Pinsk marshes. I was also not treated like Mr. Lend-Lease, for I don't think the Russians knew at this point that they were going to be so amazingly lucky as to get in on this giveaway of the frantic forties. In fact, those Russians in London were completely indifferent as to whether I ever got to Moscow or not. And could you blame them? For the front was falling to pieces and the Germans were kicking the pants off the Red Army. What did another foreigner mean? Especially a newspaper foreigner.

A tired red-eyed man shoved some papers into my waiting

hands, told me to fill them out, attach six photographs of myself, and wait.

This I all did. And absolutely nothing happened.

I kept doing my regular job at the London office and began reading the daily reports about the Russian-German war with mounting interest. Here was something that might concern me very much personally. And, did it!

A month passed. Two months. Down at the British Ministry of Information I heard one morning that a convoy was making up around the shores of Scotland to take off for Russia. I say I heard it at the M.O.I. I heard it at a pub near the Ministry and confirmed it at the M.O.I.

That little angle gave me a cold shudder. As Wendell Willkie used to say when correspondents asked him his schedule as he prepared to fly over or near enemy territory during the war, "I don't like to be a clay pigeon, but if I've got to be one, I certainly don't want to tell the shooter how and where to hit me."

It gave one an uneasy feeling when you realized the implications of learning in a pub about a convoy sailing with war material for Russia. If I had heard about it, so could any enemy agent who understood English. And plenty of them did. I got my information at a pub named the Fitzroy, which, at that time, featured a long-haired fellow with a gold-plated chain around his neck and silver bracelets dangling from each wrist. His hair was long. His eyelashes drooped. But he played a fair Dixieland piano.

I went down to the Soviet Consulate again. I told them a convoy was leaving for Russia and that I wanted to get aboard. They were just as indifferent as before about whether I got to their country aboard that convoy or ever.

I kept on waiting.

Then, one day, when the Wehrmacht had smashed its way across a large section of the Russians' western front and was actually headed up the old Smolensk road for Moscow, I was informed by telephone from the Soviet Consulate that my visa was ready.

All I had to do, I was told, was to bring my passport around. I did and there it was, the Soviet visa, in a language from which I could scarcely distinguish a single letter. But I was on my way now, I felt. Back to the Ministry of Information, an organization incidentally which I always thought functioned extremely well in difficult times. I never found its officials and workers anything but helpful and courteous and they had some trying situations (not to mention trying individuals) to deal with. It ran true to form this time.

"Will you just stand easy, Gilmore, old boy," said one of the men there who was as much of a B-picture Englishman as a London fog. "Just stand easy and we'll see what we can do for you? It shouldn't be difficult. I know you want to get on with this thing."

Several days later someone at the American Embassy whispered to me that Averell Harriman, then Lend-Lease Minister in London, Lord Beaverbrook, William Batt, General Sir Hastings Ismay, and some others were going on a big and secret mission to Moscow. They were going in planes.

"This," I said, "is my chance."

But, no luck again. I can't say I was greatly disappointed, for I certainly didn't ask to be sent to Russia and I didn't particularly want to go. I knew it was going to be tough. And unpleasant. But, I felt it would be a great story and any newspaperman likes to work on a great story. The bigger the story, the bigger and more frequent the by-line and, I'm afraid, many of us are hams at heart. The more we

see our names about our precious words the more we like it.

Years went by, it seemed, before the M.O.I. man called me into his office and, in tones as hushed as a zephyr's dying sigh, lipped it to me that a convoy was sailing shortly for Archangel. He asked me if I wanted a place.

Governments don't offer you much in this life and I've always found it's best to grab anything they let you even see the edge of. I accept, and then fight it out with the home office.

In the newspaper business, especially the foreign correspondents' end of it, ALWAYS take any transportation, or any form or communication that is offered by a government. And take it quickly. If you start referring back to the home office you're lost, and the home office, once you've committed them, nearly always go along. (There's not much else they can do if you commit them strongly enough.)

If a wire service, or a newspaper, has enough confidence in a correspondent to send him to cover a story that is submitted to papers with a total circulation running into millions, they should have confidence enough in him to let him make big decisions out on the end of the line. Most of them do.

So, if a government ever offers me anything in the way of transportation, from a camel to a flying carpet (and I've been on a couple of those too in my life), this correspondent accepts and then tells the home office. You get a reputation for being expensive, but you also get known as one of the hired hands who's quick with a bulletin and a night lead stuffed with guts.

The home office was delighted with the arrangement. It seemed they wanted nothing so much as to get rid of Gilmore. They urged me to urge the convoy to leave as soon

as possible. The convoy wouldn't be much impressed with this, I knew, but I impressed it on the M.O.I. how anxious the AP was to have Gilmore out on the briny headed for Russia.

Now came the question of clothes.

Would New York suffer a big bill on this? We messaged them and Kent Cooper replied in his characteristically generous manner:

GILMORE BIG MAN LOTS SURFACE TO COVER STOP COVER HIM AT ALL COST KENPER.

I jogged down to that famous London store, Moss Brothers, known for years to the wearers of the colors of kings and queens as "Moss Bross"—a place where you can get just about anything in the way of wearing apparel. They not only had gear for Russia, but they produced a man to outfit me who'd lived in Archangel.

Moss Bross has been outfitting Englishmen sailing for the strange corners of the world, and some that are not so strange, for so long that you can walk right in and tell them you are leaving for the Fijis tomorrow and they'll load you down with stuff for Fiji quicker than you can Bow bells.

"Russia?" said a floorwalker. "Oh, Mr. Henderson, will you please just step this way. Here's a gentleman going to Russia. You'd know all about that, wouldn't you? I believe you lived out there once, didn't you?"

Smilingly, but with no trace of surprise, Mr. Henderson nodded that he had lived out there. That he'd spent an amusing winter in Russia above the Arctic Circle. He had things for me, he explained, and he did, too.

Mr. Henderson began running me around the store pulling furry coats off hooks, draping them over my 220 pounds,

diving into boxes, and coming up with gloves and mittens and fur-lined boots.

"Why, this is like getting ready to go to the North Pole," I said.

"Worse, sir," said Mr. Henderson. "It's colder at Archangel. Dry cold at the Pole, sir. Wet cold at the Angel."

I don't know why it is, but everywhere I have ever gone in my life is to a place featuring what is described as wet cold. Always some other place had the dry cold. I have been to a large number of places and I have been very cold. I have never discovered the difference between dry cold and wet cold. Cold is cold.

I didn't need everything that Mr. Henderson piled into my aching arms, but I needed most of it, for it was very cold in Russia that winter and the fires, except the fires of Russian patriotism, never burned very high. There just wasn't much fuel for the civilian front.

"You spoke of the Pole, sir," said Mr. Henderson behind a quiet cough as I was leaving. "If you'll pardon me, there's a rather good one on that. The Russians have a saying that there are only two good Poles—the North and the South. Bit hard on the Poles, sir, but that's how they feel about them."

I told Mr. Henderson that I would remember him to Archangel if not to Warsaw.

2

I am sure I never fully realized England's desperate position in those early days of the war until the captain of our tramp steamer looked me up and down and asked me to

man a weapon and stand a regular watch on our voyage from the west coast of Scotland to one of the Soviet Union's northernmost ports.

"But, sir," I explained, "I know nothing about machine guns. I've never even fired one."

He took a drag on his pipe.

"It doesn't matter much," he said, "for very few other people have fired machine guns. As a matter of fact, even should you manage to hit an airplane or a submarine with a machine gun, I doubt very seriously if you would destroy it."

"Then why man it?" I asked.

"Oh," he said with a sad shrug, "for the looks of the thing, I suppose." He walked off.

At that moment I believe I knew for the first time just what England was up against. This was September 1941. Before Pearl Harbor. Before Britain had the United States as a full-time ally.

Our last sight of land for a long time was of Scapa Flow, just north of the top tip of Scotland.

A Royal Air Force flight lieutenant who was going to Russia on the same convoy pointed with a cigarette to a school of barrage balloons, hanging fat and brown over some sort of land establishment of the British Royal Navy.

"Our last sight of civilization for a while," he said, and then he quickly caught himself.

"My God," he hastened to explain, "look what we've come to. I have just referred to a barrage balloon as a sign of civilization."

He walked off and left me just as the captain had. People seemed to be making these doomy, gloomy remarks about the war and walking off.

A few minutes later I heard him earnestly explaining his

remark to an R.A.F. squadron leader, Roland Norman, who was also going to Russia.

"That," said the young man, "is what the war has done to me."

I learned later he'd been a serious writer of rather sensitive verse before the war took him into the Air Force. That night I discovered him up on the bridge, for that's where the old Browning machine gun was that I was to mount guard on. The R.A.F. man had charge of one machine gun at one end of the open bridge and I had the other. I became convinced we'd be lucky if we didn't shoot one another, or a member of the crew, if we had to fire those guns.

Never once did we shoot, for while the German observation planes came out and looked us over almost daily as we neared Spitzbergen away up above the Arctic Circle, neither the Luftwaffe nor German submarines bothered us.

As we neared Archangel I asked the captain the reason we'd had no attack for we had tanks and crated Hurricane fighter planes on our decks and plenty of war stuff in the holds.

"The Germans are having things pretty much their own way," he explained. "They seem to be marching through the Russian front at will. I suppose they take the view that it's better to let this material land than to sink it, for it's probably only a matter of time before they capture it."

That remark gave me a shock and I told the captain so.

"I'm staying in Russia," I said. "You're not."

"It's bloody in Russia," he said, "but it's also bloody at sea. The whole bloody world is bloody. I think I shall mix myself a drink. Would you care to join me?"

We sighted Spitzbergen one day, and after a couple more quick Arctic sunsets, Bear Island, a little dot of land off the

Norwegian coast. And then the Soviet mainland, and one morning, off in the distance, the entrance to Archangel. Soviet naval ships approached us. We slowed down and took on a pilot—and a group of customs workers, the chief of whom was a young girl who was not only built along the lines of a shaggy bear, but looked like one. Her black hair was shaggy. Her fur coat was shaggy and shaggy hair protruded from the tops of her boots. She also had the makings of a shaggy mustache.

She stared at me very hard. Then she broke into a grin.

"He looks like one of them," said Wing Commander Norman, pointing to me.

"You mean he looks like two of them," said Larry Lesueur, then and still, of the Columbia Broadcasting System.

I knew what he said was true, and even today, almost thirteen years after that morning in the icy waters off Archangel, I know I look far more like a Russian general than most Russian generals do. Every year I lived in Russia I looked more like one.

I told my wife, Tamara, about this once.

"You eat too much," she said in the slow, sad way she has sometimes, "and so do Russian generals."

I offered the shaggy lady customs officer a package of cigarettes, but she shook her head and said something in Russian. I didn't know a word of it at that time. I looked as dumb as I felt. She smiled and grabbed me by both of my ears. Then she kissed me on the left cheek, then on the right cheek and then bussed me on my mouth. It wasn't unpleasant at all. If I were not a gentleman I'd say that I'd been at sea, in convoy, for more than three weeks and that under such conditions one misses certain things.

Whatever it was, there it was. I went off below decks and

rubbed a few soft chords on a ukulele I'd brought along. I was confused and I still don't know what motivated the shaggy lady she-bear into taking the action she had.

After several hours the convoy, one ship after another, started sailing through that last section of the White Sea to the port of Archangel. The frozen, snow-covered land was on either side of the ship now. It was like sailing up a river. Every so often people on the bank. It was a clear blue day.

How glad they must be to see us, I thought, looking up at the Union Jack flying from this ship that was bringing them tanks and fighter planes, and even food and clothing.

I waved to a group of people on the bank. They didn't wave back. They just stared. I waved at the next group and took off my hat. They only stared. Pretty soon I tired of that game. The next cluster of Russians I saw I met with a stare. And the people in this group stared back just as the groups had to whom I'd waved and taken off my hat.

Three hours of this and we were alongside the quay.

Two of our seamen threw off a rope and motioned to a group of Russians to grab the other end. They too stared and didn't move. The rope slowly slid along the icy quay. The Russians kept on staring.

Finally the Russian pilot on our bridge shouted something at them through a steel megaphone. Mechanically they shuffled over and took hold of the rope that had been thrown at their feet a second time. This was near the bow of our ship. The same performance took place aft. Years later I understood the complete, almost stunned indifference of these people at Archangel. For what I didn't know that morning was that these people were political prisoners, banished to the cold, hard land near the Arctic Circle.

The ship tied up, we learned that the city of Archangel

was on one side of the Dvina River and we were on the other. The gangplank was lowered. From off near a huge pile of lumber walked a Russian soldier, muffled to his ears and nose tip in a great yellow fur coat. He carried a rifle under one arm and took up a position at the bottom of the gangplank.

"We're in safe hands," said the R.A.F. onetime writer of verse, "a guard for the ship."

Just a few minutes later, when we tried to go ashore, we learned what the guard was really there for. He was there to guard Mother Russia.

"*Dokumenti, pzhalasta,*" he said in a stern voice.

"He's asking for our papers," explained a Russian-speaking member of the ship's six passengers. "Show him your passport with that Russian visa. That's all he wants to see."

Whoever was at the head of the line trying to get ashore produced his properly visaed passport, in which the customs and immigration people had recorded their stamp. The guard looked it over and then shook his head and said something we didn't understand. He motioned us back up the gangplank with his gun and when we didn't move, he raised it to his shoulder and pointed it at us. We moved off, back on deck, and told the captain about the incident. He said he expected someone with authority would be along after a while. He asked us to have some tea with him until that time. Someone with authority did show up after about a half hour. He had a translator with him and explained to the captain that he, the captain, would be allowed ashore, but no one else.

"Why can't we go ashore?" I asked. "I've got a properly visaed American passport. Visaed in Russian for entry into the U.S.S.R."

The translator repeated this to the man in authority. He shook his head.

"You need special landing permits," the translator explained.

"Then we want them," someone suggested.

The translator translated back to the man with authority, but not enough to get us ashore.

"He says it will take time," said the translator.

"Damned cheek, I call it," said one of the Britons on board.

Cheek or not, it did take time.

Three days later we were still on the ship and Ivan the Irritable, or a counterpart, still stood guard at the bottom of the gangplank. Only the captain had been ashore.

On the fourth morning we looked over the rail and saw a ruddy-faced man in R.A.F. blue gray looking up at us. He wore a long overcoat and a fur hat and looked very smart.

"Good morning," he said. "Did you chaps come over with this convoy?"

We told him we certainly did, and then we poured out our troubles over the rail.

He thought for a while.

"This is a very bad show," he said. "I'll see if we can't do something about it. What are your names?"

We wrote them out on a piece of paper and flung it over the side to him. He picked it up from the snow, saluted, smiled, and prepared to leave.

"What's your name, please?" I asked.

"Bird," he said, "Group Captain Bird."

Years later I was to see this R.A.F. officer return to Moscow as the air attaché at the British Embassy and die suddenly on a dark November morning in a Moscow hospital. He be-

came my friend and I never had a better one, nor ever knew a greater gentleman.

Group Captain Ivoe Bird walked smartly away and we watched him go. He did his stuff somewhere, for before very long and the amber Arctic sun had set the two R.A.F. officers on our ship had been taken off past Ivan's menacing rifle. And with the proper landing documents. Ours arrived the following morning.

Now that we could get off our ship home just what did we want to do? Everyone agreed that we wanted to get to Archangel city and see someone about getting to Moscow, for the convoy was almost unloaded now and we had visions of being stranded up there with the snow and the ice and the Russians.

"Group Captain Bird's looking after that," said a young Royal Navy lieutenant to whom we were now pouring out our woes, "but in the meantime, would you like to get over to Archangel?"

We told him that was exactly what we wanted.

"I can get you over," he explained, "but I'm afraid I can't get you back. You see, the ice is forming up here and in the evening it will be too heavy and we won't be able to make it."

"How'll we get back then?"

"There's a ferry of a sort," he said.

We decided to go with him and take the ferry of a sort back.

The first thing we saw on Archangel's main street was a man—if you'll pardon me—relieving himself in what would have been a gutter if everything had not been leveled by snow and ice. He buttoned his trousers and sauntered off. At the next corner we saw a man sprawled on his face in the

snow and ice of what should have been the sidewalk. We stopped and looked him over. He was breathing heavily and he was high with the smell of alcohol. We moved on until we found a restaurant. I remember the sign:

PECTAPAH.

"Pectapah," I said out loud to myself. "Pecpapah means restaurant."

A British correspondent who'd been reading Russian grammar all the way over stared at me with cold disdain.

"It's not pecpapah," he said. "Russian is pronounced just as it's spelled and what you call pectapah spells restaurant."

Earlier in the trip, this correspondent had asked me with considerable sarcasm what I—a sports writer he called me—hoped to do in Russia.

Now, with this pectapah-restaurant business, I really felt like slinking back to my box scores.

Inside the place we found an R.A.F. airman sitting by himself at a table. He was conversing fluently in Russian to someone at a nearby table.

"This," I said, "is our boy."

I went over and introduced myself. He asked us all to sit down. We drew up chairs and learned that his mother and father were Ukrainians living in London and that this was how he knew how to speak Russian, for the two languages are very much alike. He also explained what Group Captain Bird and the naval officer were doing at Archangel.

"We've got a wing up here," he said.

"Are you flying with the Red Air Force?"

"Flying," he snorted, "they won't let us off the bloody ground."

"But haven't you been defending Leningrad?" asked the British correspondent.

"Like hell we have," said the airman. "We ain't been defending nothing but ourselves and we're all browned off. We're bloody well fed up. They don't like us and we don't like them."

"Whom are you talking about?" asked the British newsman.

"I'm talking about us and the bleedin' Russkies."

All this was absolutely amazing to me. I felt like shaking my head to clear it. It was as if I had water in my ears and wasn't hearing properly what this young R.A.F. man said.

"You'll see," he added. "You'll see what I mean."

He looked around at us.

"Here, let's have something to drink," he suggested. "They've got no vodka today, but they've got some spirit. It's pretty foul stuff, but it's strong."

We had spirit and he was right on both counts.

None of us had much money so we didn't have much spirit.

At last time came to search out the ferry. The R.A.F. man showed us the way and then said good-by and left us. A British merchant seaman staggered into view. He almost reached us when he collapsed in a snowbank. Two or three of us lifted him out. He looked at us with glazed eyes.

"Cossacks," he whispered, "Cossacks."

Then he fell on his face in the snow.

We picked him up and sat him, at least right side up, against the snowbank.

He looked at us out of half-opened eyes. His lips moved, but they said nothing.

Two other merchant seamen came along. They'd been hunting for this one. Together they lugged him off.

The ferry hove into view and as it did, what seemed to be

several hundred Russians, men, women, and children, appeared from nowhere and dashed for the ferry.

It was a wood burner and built to hold, I would say, about one hundred people. At least three hundred jammed aboard, including ourselves. After a great deal of shouting we moved off into the Dvina, now spotted with large ice blocks. Sometimes they hit us and sometimes we hit them. Then there would be whole islands of them. The ferry would slow down and almost stop, imprisoned in the ice. The pilot would reverse her, give her the gun, and charge the ice pack. All of this right out in the middle of a very wide and probably very deep and certainly very frigid river. We reached a point about one hundred yards from the bank. From the side we were trying to get to. This bank of the river wasn't far from our ship. But here the ice was too thick and from the shouting and the mounting action on board we found the ferry was going no farther. That the next move was going to be over the side and onto the ice below and then foot it to the shore.

A rope was flung over the side. I noticed a man on crutches swing up to this, and while a friend held his crutches, he let himself down the ladder. Almost solicitously the friend dropped the crutches to him, one by one.

Extremely odd, a cripple going first, I thought. But that was what was happening. The others held back, waiting. They were going to let the cripple test the ice. I thought that somewhat horrible.

The cripple took two steps on his crutches. They flew out from under him and he fell flat on his backside, the crutches skidding out from him like oars from a boat in a storm-tossed sea. A roar of laughter went up from the scores of Russians who'd been watching him. And they kept on laughing as he

floundered about the ice trying to pick up his crutches and get to his feet.

My God, what had I gotten into?

People in America, or any other place I'd ever been in, didn't act like this. And they didn't laugh at cripples. Ever. Suddenly I felt very far from home.

3

During the time we'd been in convoy the ship's radio had been silent. Those were the rules, for the Royal Navy, which was escorting us, said a radio, even the simplest sort, would give off radiation which could be detected by submarines. So, no radio, and therefore no news up there in the Arctic Ocean.

Tied alongside the quay in Archangel, we turned on the ship's set, hungry for word of what was going on in the world and particularly avid for anything concerning the Russian-German war. It didn't take long to find out the worst. The BBC—which during the entire time of my stay in the Soviet Union was to be my and many another foreigner's chief news source—announced that the diplomatic corps, the foreign correspondents and the Soviet Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, and a few other government agencies, were being evacuated to Kuibyshev. The Germans were getting that close to Moscow, the Soviet capital.

Kuibyshev. Where was Kuibyshev?

Someone discovered it on a map and found that its former name had been Samara. It was on the Volga, at the eastern end of a lengthy horseshoe bend that this mighty river makes as it rolls down through the broad heart of Russia to Astrakhan and the Caspian Sea.

What fascinating names, I thought. Samara and Astrakhan and the Caspian. And what unfascinating news that we were not going directly to Moscow from Archangel.

For several days it didn't look as if we were going anywhere.

Efforts to find a Soviet official with authority enough to tell us what to do failed three or four times daily. We started off for the railway station and after standing around and badgering flunkies, we got to see the commandant. He confirmed our fears. We couldn't move without a permit. From whom did we get a permit? The commandant shrugged his shoulders.

"You are foreigners," he said. "Through the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs."

We told him that institution had been evacuated to Kuibyshev.

"Then get it at Kuibyshev," he suggested. "Go to the post office. The telegraph works in our country."

We appealed to the R.A.F. again, and let me say right here that during a long war and in various parts of the world, I discovered that the air force, be it the R.A.F., the American Air Force, or the Soviet Air Force, can get more done and in a shorter period of time than any group, force, or government agency that I've ever encountered anywhere. They can get through government red tape and stone-hard regulations with jetlike speed more often than not.

I suppose this is because they are junior services and not so historically impressed with the routine way of doing things. I have had great favors from the army, the navy and the marines and I've certainly appreciated them all, but the fly boys are the best tape cutters.

The R.A.F. didn't let us down. They sent what they called

"a signal" to the British Embassy, now apparently in Kuibyshev, formerly Samara. And then again we waited.

Whiling away the hours on shipboard one day we noticed a man, dressed in Red Army khaki, sitting on the ice of the river Dvina, his trousers down to his knees, and his bare bottom in the closest possible contact with the said ice.

Very peculiar behavior, indeed. But not so peculiar when we sighted another man in uniform standing not far away from the bare-bottomed ice-sitter, a rifle under his arm.

We asked the bosun about this.

He explained, saying he too had been puzzled when he saw it the first time. It happened, he added, every day. And then he related how, through an interpreter, he'd learned that the fellow sitting on his frozen backside on the ice was doing it as a punishment. He'd been caught stealing from the load that was being taken off the convoy. We were bringing in food and clothing in limited quantity.

Could this really be true?

Later I learned that it was very true and that in northern ports it is an established punishment for pilfering.

"The sod is lucky," said the bosun. "If a war wasn't on and they weren't shorthanded up here they'd probably shoot him."

"For stealing a case of beans?" I asked.

"For stealing a bean," said the bosun.

I didn't hang around to watch what happened when they took the poor man up from the ice. I went below and found the chief engineer, a lovable, doughty old boy from Tyneside, and asked him for a drink. He gave me a long shot of rum. I told him what I'd just seen and heard.

"Ah, lad," he said, "these buggers are Asiatics. They don't

think like me and you. And you can be bleedin' thankful they're on our side."

How right the chief was.

4

A message to let us off the ship and send us to Kuibyshev must have finally arrived, for someone from the British mission told us to get ready. That we were leaving by train the following afternoon.

The we—as far as our ship was concerned—meant:

Walter Kerr, of the *Herald Tribune.*

Larry Lesueur, of the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Ralph Parker, then going to Russia to represent the *Times,* of London, and the New York *Times.*

Eric McLaughlin, an Australian newspaperman from Sydney.

Wing Commander Roland (Bo) Norman of the R.A.F.

And me, going to be the second man in the Associated Press bureau in the U.S.S.R.

We gathered our things together. They consisted largely of clothes, soap, and cigarettes. The captain packed us food for six days and a bottle of scotch and a bottle of gin each.

"You certainly should get through to Moscow in six days," he said, "and you've got to go through Moscow to get to Kuibyshev. I know of no other route."

The morning of our departure broke cold and cloudy, and before ten o'clock it was snowing. And it snowed progressively harder as time neared for leaving the ship. We were told to be ready at three in the afternoon, for the train would be leaving at four. A truck would come for us.

At three o'clock there was, of course, no truck. Just the swirling snow and a strong, sighing wind that moaned above us in the ship's rigging with every fresh gust.

About four-fifteen the truck came. We would have walked to the station if it had not been about six miles and the snow so thick you could see no more than ten or twelve feet in front of you. We weren't sure just where the station was located, but we hurriedly piled into the truck, an ancient, open-body affair. It was being driven by a Russian, but a British soldier sat in the driver's cabin with him.

We told the Briton that there wasn't much point in going at four-fifteen for the train left at four o'clock.

"Unless," I suggested, "they are holding it for us."

"They're holding it all right," he laughed. "It don't leave till midnight."

"Midnight! There must be some mistake."

"You'll see," he said as he looked us over in the back of the truck and told the driver to start.

We bumped and twisted and turned for five or six miles until we came to a railway crossing in a wilderness of white. Another British soldier was standing beside a huge pile of what looked to be mailbags. The truck halted. The two soldiers began to talk things over, and in the midst of what appeared to be hopeless confusion, a man in a British Army officer's uniform appeared on foot out of the snow.

"Is this the party of journalists?" he asked.

"And Wing Commander Norman, sir," said the R.A.F. man. I looked at him. The snow had frozen on his long black mustaches and heavy eyebrows and turned them white.

"Ah, yes," said the officer on foot. "I'm Hulls, Colonel Hulls."

He was at close range now and I could see him much

better. He had a very red nose and a clipped brown mustache. He was tall and straight and about forty-five.

We introduced ourselves from the back of the truck as best we could in the snowstorm. He saluted each of us in turn.

"Now, see here, chaps," said the colonel, "we'll need two men to stay here with these bags. The rest of you can come to the railway station with me and we'll see if we can't get this journey organized."

I asked him if it was true that the train hadn't left at four o'clock, as we'd been told but would be going at midnight.

"My dear fellow," said the colonel, "trains out here are as indefinite as the dawn."

I puzzled over that remark for a long time. I always thought the dawn was very definite.

Parker and I found ourselves with the mailbags. The rest of them rumbled off in the truck, the colonel included. The snow thickened. The wind got stronger. Our resistance weaker. Parker gave in first and opened HIS bottle of gin, which he generously passed to me for the first drink. The bottle went back three or four times between us before the colonel and the rest of them returned.

"No train until midnight," he said. "In the meantime let's get H.M.'s mail in a wagon."

Getting H.M.'s mail in a wagon turned out to mean taking the snow-covered bags to a small Russian boxcar and dumping them inside.

The colonel said the car was going to be sealed, that it would be attached to the train we'd be leaving on, and that if we had any extra gear we could put it inside as it would be completely safe in a sealed car.

Lesueur, Kerr, and I decided to make things easier for ourselves by accepting the colonel's suggestion. We transferred a lot of our clothes to suitcases and kept only essentials for what the captain had predicted would be a trip of no more than six days to Moscow. Then we helped the colonel seal the car with tin and lead strips he pulled from a brief case, got back into the truck, and went off into a wall of whirling snow to the station. It was dark when we arrived.

The railway station at Archangel, on the opposite side of the Dvina from the city, was a mumbling mass of people. They were wedged together like a crowd leaving a football game that the home team has lost 0 to 21 and they all seemed to be angrily shouting and talking at once.

Colonel Hulls led the way to what I assumed was the station master, or commandant's office. With great relief I heard him speaking Russian as he butted a path for us through the dense crowd.

Where were all these people going? This crowded station was a scene I was to see many times in the U.S.S.R. In fact, every time I ever entered a railway station. From that night until the day I left.

Russian railway stations are always crowded, for so many people are always trying to get somewhere and there never seem to be enough tickets to go around. Or not enough permission to buy tickets to go around.

Here in this mass of men, women, and children, I noticed —I really can't say noticed, for it struck me full and pungent in the most sensitive section of my nose—a very strange smell. It was overripe and a bit sour and heavy. It turned out to be the fumes of *mahorka,* a sort of cheap tobacco much favored by the Russian peasant. It permeates every railway station, the lobby of nearly every hotel, meeting halls, clubrooms,

dining rooms, country stores, many theater lobbies, and the front seats of taxicabs.

Inside the commandant's office was the same room we'd been in before. A minion of some sort brought chairs for us. The colonel was ushered into an inner room and he stayed there a long time. We could hear a Russian voice and then the colonel's voice, both speaking Russian, and I didn't understand a word of what was being said. But after being exposed to foreign languages for a while one can very nearly always distinguish controversy, anger, persuasion, perplexity, frustration, disappointment, pleasure, and a few other human emotions.

From the colonel's Russian I thought I detected—and in this order—perplexity, disappointment, and frustration. I was right, for the conversation suddenly ceased and the colonel came through the door and said with a deep frown, "See here, chaps, this fellow just doesn't seem to know anything about you. There are no tickets for you and no permission to sell you any. There are only tickets for Norman and me. I'm sorry about this, but I'm afraid I've done all I can with this bloke. He's a most obstinate sort of fellow."

This was a blow indeed.

We asked him if this meant we were to go back to the ship and wait until tomorrow.

The colonel said it wouldn't be that easy. There was a train for Moscow only twice a week now. He also added that he was afraid the truck had left, and unless we wanted to make our own way through the snow to the ship—and he doubted if we could find it—we'd have to sleep in this room where we were now until morning and then return to the ship and try to fight out our departure with the authorities.

We grumbled and cursed.

"Let us at that commandant," said McLaughlin. "There has to be someone he can telephone. Is there a phone?"

Colonel Hulls said he believed there was a telephone.

He led the way. We pushed into the startled commandant's room and, really angry now, began to give him hell in several languages, mostly English. He looked genuinely startled at the tone and violence of our tour de force.

"Tell him," I shouted, giving orders to a full colonel for the first time in my life, "that we have permits issued by Joseph Stalin to enter this country and to go to Moscow and if he wants to take it on himself to block something that Stalin has ordered then he's going to get himself into one big pack of trouble because we are going to take this affair right to the Kremlin."

Today I shudder at my audacity on this snowy night in Archangel.

Unconsciously I had used magic words "Joseph Stalin" and "the Kremlin." As the colonel translated them we saw the shaft of fear drive home. The commandant lowered his little Slavic eyes.

From years of dealing with petty officials and bureaucrats a correspondent learns a lot about that form of human nature. You learn to sense immediately when one of them becomes afraid.

Quick to follow up our advantage, Lesueur snatched a letter from his pocket.

"I have a letter from Stalin," he said in that voice that is known to so many radio listeners, "inviting us to come to Moscow to write about the great war effort of the Red Army. The American people want to know how the Red Army is fighting Hitler. Do you want to keep them from knowing when Joseph Stalin says they can?"

Colonel Hulls translated rapidly and seriously.

That last bit was the final thrust. The commandant, now thoroughly frightened, picked up his telephone. He asked for a number and then proceeded to give someone hell on the other end of the line. Then he waited. Somebody else came on the line. The commandant began to shout. He used the same tone on that somebody that we'd used on him. He looked around at us and nodded as if to say, "I got that bastard told off."

I looked at Colonel Hulls. He was obviously shocked by our violence and behavior and our blatant bluffing. The English are so well behaved.

The commandant now began speaking to someone he addressed as "Tovarich Sobolev." Now his tone was respectful. But firm. He talked a long time, and then handed the telephone to me. I began speaking in English, for I knew no Russian.

Tovarich Sobolev spoke to me in Russian, for I suppose he knew no English. I repeated my earlier remarks to the commandant and my voice rose with each syllable. When I finished I handed the telephone to Kerr.

He said some choice things in English, and then added some Russian words (Walter had been studying Russian on the ship coming over and had done pretty well with it). He thrust the instrument into the hands of another, and so it went until all of us, Hulls and Norman excluded, had said our piece. Then the colonel took the telephone and spoke quietly to Tovarich Sobolev. He kept nodding and nodding.

"How long have you been on that ship? I mean since she docked?"

"Six days," we shouted.

He continued to work on Tovarich Sobolev.

The tide had definitely turned. Now we were riding with it.

I knew his remarks were no longer in the frustration and disappointment department. They radiated self-assurance, almost righteous firmness, and then appreciation.

He motioned to the commandant to take the phone.

"*Da,* Tovarich Sobolev," said the commandant. He listened a long time while the Tovarich did the speaking. "*Da,* Tovarich Sobolev. *Budyet,* Tovarich Sobolev. *Ita budyet sechas.*"

The good colonel winked.

"You're in, chaps," he said.

The commandant hung up the telephone. His tanned face broke into a broad, wrinkled smile, exposing a mouthful of gold teeth. His little eyes were just slits in a moonface. He said something to us.

"The commandant," translated Colonel Hulls, "says that everything is fixed. He is sorry you were caused some inconvenience by the stupidity of some desk louse. He hopes you understand." The commandant interrupted the translation and made another speech.

"Our friend the commandant," the colonel began again, "says he hopes you understand that there are some stupid workers even in the Soviet Union. That his is a new country. That a war is on. That the people are learning. That they are learning through the wise leadership of Comrade Stalin, the country's leader and teacher. He hopes you have a pleasant trip."

The commandant, still smiling broadly as if he'd brought the whole thing off by himself and won a tremendous victory

over the dark, inefficient forces of bureaucracy, stepped forward and shook hands with each of us. He did this as if we were congratulating him.

Then he commenced to shout.

Russian men in padded jackets, fur caps, and felt boots seemed to appear from three doors at once. They lifted our spare luggage and, leaving a trail of strong *mahorka* smoke, charged into the mass of humanity in the big waiting room of the Archangel railway station.

Following behind them, I marveled at the way these luggage bearers knocked a path through this wall of human flesh. Had Bronko Nagurski, the old plunging fullback, been a Russian? He must have.

We got out of the waiting room and pounded down the long platform beside the dark coaches of a waiting train. The snow had stopped falling and a big bright moon cast its soft light over the white countryside and the dark fir trees that grew right up to the tracks. I thought of a scene from an old movie, *Shanghai Express.*

Before one of the cars the Russian fullbacks halted. But just for a moment. Once more they went into action, plunging headlong into the car. We followed our interference.

The car was in half darkness, illuminated only by a candle or kerosene lamp. It was hard to see what was going on up ahead. But there was a hell of a commotion. Angry shouts and obvious curses. These grew louder and more violent. Then whispered words and near silence. The men who'd hauled our luggage to the car marched past us, bringing four well-dressed Russian men with them. The porters (for that's what they were) asked us to take our seats. The four civilians looked afraid—and angry. The colonel tipped the porters. They smiled and bowed.

"Who were those men," I asked, "and what were they so sore about?"

"They were people who were going to Moscow," explained the colonel. "They held tickets for these seats we are now sitting in. We've put them out in the snow and they don't like it at all."

5

Paul Winterton, a British correspondent, once said that there is no such thing as a Russian expert—that there are just varying degrees of ignorance.

But I didn't know how right he was one cold morning in the ancient city of Yaroslavl, where we found ourselves after three days' train travel from Archangel.

Some word had come through to Yaroslavl about us and the local authorities took us off the train and drove us through the snow- and ice-packed streets to the Grand Hotel. Incidentally, it has been my experience in Europe and other places that Grand Hotel can be the name of a place to beware of. In Persia it usually means an establishment that the Soviet Union is operating in partnership with bedbugs. The Grand Hotel, Yaroslavl, was no exception, and in all its several hundred years of existence had never boasted a private bathroom.

Our little party assembled in a large front parlor for breakfast. I had several glasses of very hot tea with mine and, to put it frankly, had to go to the men's room.

"Where is it?" I asked the Russian expert among us, a heavy, flabby man, who weighted himself down with books on Russia and weighted us down with his opinions.

"Where is what?" he asked over his spectacles. I had interrupted something he was reading about an ancient Russian named Yaroslav the Wet.

"The gents'," I told him.

He stared at me with heavy disdain and answered me very slowly.

"Gilmore, you are in a country of Communism. There is complete equality of the sexes. These people are not hampered by false modesty as we of the Western world. Here there is only one such room, shared by men and women alike, and why shouldn't it be this way?"

"All right," I said, "but for heaven's sake, where is it?"

Coldly he instructed me to go down the long corridor outside the parlor door and take the last turning but one to the right.

I went and I found the room and I gratefully discovered that it was not coed, at least for the moment. The accommodations consisted of two wooden stalls with swinging doors and a single washbasin. I entered one of the stalls and locked its door. Then I heard the voices of several women. They had come into the room. There was no doubt about it, they were women all right and, quite naturally, were speaking Russian. I listened hard for a male voice. I heard none. I remained in my stall for quite a while just listening.

These women not only didn't leave, but were joined by others. The situation was getting desperate, for I still hadn't accomplished the mission that sent me to this room and the place seemed to be filling up with females.

I had to do something, so gathering all my courage, I unlatched the door and resolutely shoved it forward. The door hit something hard, and from the piercing wail that went up I knew I'd hit a baby. But it was too late to stop now. I

discovered myself in the middle of a group of belligerent women and one screaming child. The women were shouting at me. If I use this word shouting a good many times to describe the way Russians behave it is because they do shout a very great part of the time. Well, these were certainly giving it to me and it was perfectly obvious they were saying some very rude things to me at the top of their voices.

With limping dignity I retreated from the room, turned to the left, and marched up the corridor, the din behind me increasing as several of the women followed. I took refuge in our parlor and shut the door.

In about three minutes, Colonel Hulls, his face as grave as if someone had accused him of stealing the bell out of the Yaroslavl Cathedral, entered the room where I was standing with the Russian expert and saying absolutely nothing about my recent experience.

"Gilmore," said the colonel, "the management has lodged a strong complaint. What have you been doing in the ladies' room?"

From that day on I've never placed much faith in Russian experts.

6

The colonel told us toward nightfall on that one and only day in Yaroslavl that he'd been huddling with the authorities who'd received instructions about our party. We were going to Kuibyshev and not to Moscow. This meant turning around and doubling back on a portion of our tracks from Archangel.

I may not know much about a lot of things, but I've always

prided myself on being able to read a map. I'd been looking at the map of the Soviet Union during the last few days, perhaps more seriously than ever before in my life. Now that map concerned me. If the Soviets had any direct way of getting from northern Russia to Kuibyshev by rail at that time, it was a military secret. Directly to Kuibyshev, as far as I was concerned, was a nonexistent direction. Yet the colonel had said the authorities were taking us "directly to Kuibyshev."

He announced we were to leave at ten o'clock sharp that night.

"I'm afraid," he added, "that the accommodations leave something to be desired. It's what the Russians call a 'hard car,' which means no proper, soft bunks, but at least the wagon'll be private. They laid it on special for us."

Ten sharp that night found us at the railway station, tired, well fed, but with a clawing thirst. The authorities asked us to wait. The train was not quite ready. We waited, and in the meantime tried to do something about our thirst, for it was very cold outside. Around 30 below zero.

I tried the restaurant attached to the station, repeating over and over the word "vodka," on which I felt that even I could not go wrong. There is virtually no way to mispronounce vodka. But the restaurant people would only smile sadly and shake their heads. I returned to our group empty-handed.

"What's the word for dearie, or darling?" asked Wing Commander Norman.

"*Dushka* will do," said the colonel.

Norman took off like a Spitfire, and in less than ten minutes he was back in our midst with not one, but three bottles of vodka.

I asked him how he did it.

"I just kept saying *'Dushka,* vodka. Vodka, *dushka. Dushka,* vodka," he replied, wetting his lips as he opened the first bottle and passed it around.

Here, I thought, was a true man of the world.

About one-thirty the following morning the Yaroslavl authorities led us to our private car. It was private, all right, but it was a half car, with a partition and locking door that shut us off from the rest of the car. But, blessed heaven, it had a private lavatory. The berths were wooden and there were no mattresses of any sort. The few blankets were old and thin. I climbed into a top bunk, sheathed in my overcoat and my boots still on my feet. I took off my tie and tried to go to sleep. It didn't come until hours later, when the train, our private car tied to its tail, slowly rolled off in the Russian darkness.

Daylight, and we were standing on a siding. We piled off the train to look over the situation. The situation was a train about sixteen cars long and packed to capacity with men, a few in uniform, and women and children. We discovered that one of the men, a Red Air Force colonel, could speak some English and that he was returning to the U.S.S.R. after a mission to London. After some conversation it turned out that he'd been on the same convoy as we had. He was most pleasant and informed us that we were going east, towards the Ural Mountains, and that this was the only way to get to Kuibyshev by rail, with the Germans so close to Moscow.

We asked how long it was going to take to get to Kuibyshev. Without hesitation he said no more than three or four days. I don't know why it is, but Russians are the most optimistic people in the world concerning how long it takes to get anywhere or how long it will take to get a job done. And

they are always wrong, by hours and days. They invariably underestimate.

That night we got to a town named Vologda. It was dark in the railway station and the mercury was lying on its stomach. Our car was on a siding again. The Luftwaffe came over and dropped a few small bombs, and the blast blew three glass windows out of our car. We patched this up by cutting out cardboard squares from some boxes we were carrying and fitting them into the places where the glass panes had been. Not much in the way of windows, but they kept the cold out—after a fashion.

By our candlelight I saw from my map that we had passed through Vologda on our way down from Archangel. We were now going northwards on the same line we'd traveled southwards. But at the spot on the map where we were now standing I saw two black lines—indicating a railway line, and a double-tracked one at that—leading off eastward from Vologda.

I looked more closely at the map. This was the Trans-Siberian, and this must be the line we were going to take. It was, too.

Now, in those days when the western front was falling to pieces, the Germans were advancing several miles a day across the western portion of the U.S.S.R., and the Soviet Government was struggling mightily to move all the factories possible to the Urals and Central Siberia. And when they moved a factory and its machinery they moved all the workers, too. Quite naturally, with a desperate war, with the country fighting for its very existence, factories and their precious machinery and their workers took precedence over a train such as ours which, I learned later, was made up mostly of invalids, women, and children being evacuated to

the rear, and a few men off to not too important jobs in Siberia.

All this meant spending hours on sidings waiting for the factory trains, all headed eastward, to go by. I checked and double-checked. We were on the main trunk of the Trans-Siberian all right, but while it showed double tracks on my map and on maps of several of the others in our group, the Trans-Siberian at this point was only a single-track line. Yet how could a map printed by a well-known and highly respected company make such a mistake? I didn't realize then what I was to learn later, that this is part of the Soviet system —not to give anyone if possible the correct information about anything. Certainly no correct information on such a thing as a railway.

We sat on one siding for six hours this day and then traveled only about thirty-five miles until we turned off onto another. It was obvious that it was going to take a long time to get to Kuibyshev on the Volga at this rate.

We pored over our maps again and reached the conclusion that we were using the Trans-Siberian to a point just east of the Ural Mountains. From there we assumed we'd turn off on a railway that led southwards, down the eastern slopes of the Urals, and then use a railroad that went back over the Urals, westward to Kuibyshev. We were correct, and this is what we did. But it took time.

The ship's captain had given us food for six days, but it was a generous supply. This was our fifth day. We ate off the city authorities in Yaroslavl, so that much was saved, but the prospects didn't look good for eating all the way to Kuibyshev. We talked this over with the colonel. He said he believed we could find some meals in restaurants in the railway stations along the way, but only in the big-city stations.

Until we came to a big city he suggested we'd better try to buy food from the peasants who appear at each station, no matter how small, offering potatoes, onions, and an occasional egg for sale. He reminded us that we had very little Soviet money and that the ruble was falling in value every day and that we could get more from the peasants by trading off clothes and soap and cigarettes.

"But from the way you chaps look," said the colonel, and there was no laughter in his voice, "you obviously have no soap."

We did look a mess. Some of us unshaven and, I'm afraid, unwashed, for the water in the lavatory was always frozen. We explained to the colonel.

"There's no excuse for that," he commented. "Every Russian railway station has running hot water. It's free. Don't you see these people dropping off the train and queuing up for it at every stop?"

I remembered how the Russians did leave the train at every station and how they did line up for something. It never occurred to me that it was hot water they were after.

"Of course," said the colonel. "Take this kettle and fetch yourself some. And keep on fetching it. We should keep up appearances, you know."

We began doing as the Russians did. We'd drop off at the railway stations along the way and fill our kettle with the steaming water available at every place. Many times I saw the Russians in the line giving way to us. Sometimes they would simply push us to the head of the line to let us get our hot water first.

I said something to the colonel about this.

"It's traditional," he replied. "The Russian is always polite to the foreigner."

The colonel was right. Up to a point. The point was the cold war. But a very hot war was going on as we made that railway trip. America wasn't in that war, but Britain was. On the same side with the Russians. And the Russian people liked the English and the Americans. And they still like them, I might add. I speak of the Russian people.

Those days on our hard car, with the bitter cold outside, the thin blankets, and certainly not enough food every day, were an experience that I shall not lightly forget. We, the correspondents, complained about almost everything, I'm afraid. We didn't have enough food. We didn't have enough drink. There was very little sugar for the tea that we brewed ourselves. And practically no bread. There was no decent place to wash. We didn't have enough clothes. Our clean ones were in the boxcar up ahead, we hoped. We were tiring of one another's company. Everyone had told all of his jokes.

One member of the company was morose and miserable. He had good reason. He was constipated. Monumentally. He hadn't been for seven days. McLaughlin fell down a hole beside the railway track one night and knocked out three of his teeth. One had stopped talking to another member of the group. Still another had lost around a thousand dollars to another at gin rummy. But things were different with Colonel Hulls and Wing Commander Norman. They were always the same. Bright and encouraging and behaving as if they were in their London clubs. The colonel reminded me of a good scoutmaster, and I suppose we reminded him of tenderfoot scouts. But he never said so.

"Here, Colonel," one of us would say as we sat around at what passed for mealtime. "I've opened this can."

"Good show," the colonel would reply with real enthusiasm. "Good show."

He made you feel as if you'd accomplished something truly wonderful.

"Here, Colonel, I've got the tea ready."

"That's splendid, old boy, that's simply splendid. Thank you very much. I don't mind if I do."

The wing commander kept up the same sort of patter and he did more drudgery in that tiny railway car with its wooden bunks than all the rest of us put together. And he did it laughingly. I had gained respect for the British armed forces by being with them in those bleak early days of the war in England, but I gained a new respect for them on that trip to Kuibyshev. A respect that has done nothing but grow as the years have gone by and I've gotten to know more of them. They are very splendid soldiers and gentlemen and it is comforting to me to know that they are on our side and will always, I fervently hope, be on our side.

The days and nights passed so slowly.

It was getting on towards winter and the sun set about three-thirty every afternoon and it would be dark, oh, so dark, from four until about eight-thirty or nine the next morning.

We took the route we assumed we would—over the Urals into Asiatic Russia, down the eastern slopes through Magnitogorsk and Chelyabinsk, those raw, sprawling industrial cities, back over the Urals to the city of Ufa, where the colonel slipped on the ice one morning and broke his arm. He had gone off to try to arrange for more food, for we'd swapped just about everything we had to the peasants and we'd almost run out of money. Additionally, there was another tragedy. The British Embassy in Kuibyshev messaged

the colonel that the sealed boxcar with the King's mail and our clothes had arrived in Moscow, "compromised," as the colonel put it.

"What's that?" I asked him, very anxious to know, for most of my clothes were in that car.

"Broken open. Rifled. Everything stolen," he said.

Wing Commander Norman revealed that one of the pilfered bags carried blueprints of Britain's Spitfire and Hurricane fighter planes.

"Shocking thing," snapped the colonel, his arm now in a plaster cast and a sling and he in considerable pain. He'd managed to get his arm fixed up as well as to find us some food. "Damned shocking thing, this."

"A very bad show all around," said the wing commander.

"A seal's a seal," grumbled the colonel. "Civilized people respect seals. They don't break them."

The good colonel had spent several years of his life traveling about Poland and Russia. He should have, of course, known better than to let official mail get out of his sight, but in the colonel's Gordon Highlander world, a seal was a seal and people were civilized.

"I suppose I shall catch billy hell for this," he commented. "And see here, chaps, I'm extremely sorry you've had to lose your gear. I say, I am sorry."

"Sorry, hell," someone told him. "If it hadn't been for you, Colonel, we'd never gotten anywhere. Don't you apologize for anything, Colonel, ever."

I was very proud of our group at that moment.

7

That train trip from Archangel to Kuibyshev took twenty-seven days.

From 220 pounds I'd dropped to 190. Colonel Hulls had broken his arm and Eric McLaughlin had knocked out a trio of teeth. One member of the party was still smarting from the sting of losing all that money at cards to another. One more of our number was still not speaking to another. We looked and felt like old men. And we were sorry for ourselves and therefore very disappointed when no one showed up to meet us at the frozen, snow-covered Kuibyshev railway station.

Silently we commenced unpacking our few things. Then someone burst into our car with a cheery, "Ah, there you are!"

It turned out to be John Russell, then third secretary at the British Embassy, but something far grander nowadays. Behind him was a Colonel Greer, the British military attaché.

After we introduced ourselves we asked if any Americans had come along to the station.

"I'm afraid not," said John. "They're all over at the American Embassy at a party. This is your Thanksgiving, you know."

Thanksgiving.

We didn't know. We'd been out of touch with a lot of things and this was one of those early Roosevelt Thanksgivings.

Our Thanksgiving dinner that day consisted of two pieces of very cold and very dead fish. Oh, we felt so sorry for ourselves.

A British Ford, with a Greek chauffeur at the wheel, took us to Kuibyshev's Grand Hotel. A uniformed policeman, with a long blue overcoat that reached the tips of his heavy fur boots and a tall, fur-trimmed hat, stood beside the iced-over front door. He saluted us while we wrestled our luggage inside. It must have been 25 degrees below zero.

The same pungent smell of *mahorka* fumes greeted us in a lobby that seemed composed of Persian rugs and reclining smoking Russians. They were everywhere. Both of them. A short, blond, toad-like woman, who was sitting behind a desk, asked us in English, with a strong Slavic accent, for our passports.

"Of course," she explained, "you are expected. We have rooms for you."

I'd been told never, never under any circumstance, to give up my passport and I told her I wasn't giving it up.

"But you haf to," she said. "Et iss de rul."

We were adamant. Then the assistant manager, Jack Margolis, born in London's Whitechapel, but now a Soviet citizen, showed up. His English was almost perfect and he quietly and patiently explained that there was no other way. If we wanted a room we'd have to surrender our passports. They would be registered and returned to us. We were too weary to argue further. We handed them over, but with considerable misgivings.

For the record, this procedure goes on every time any American registers in a Soviet hotel. If for no other reason it gives the Russian authorities ample opportunity to copy and counterfeit any American passport handed them. I have always hoped that when Soviet citizens register in hotels in this country—and during the war quite a few of them did—that we would take their passports and give them a good going over.

We hauled our luggage to the second floor, where we'd been assigned a room. While we were registering, a crowd of people poured out of what appeared to be a dining room. They stood and stared at us. I know we did look strange. Even to those people down on the eastern bank of the frozen Volga in an old trading town that once was known as Samara, but now called Kuibyshev after a dead hero of the so-called Bolshevik Revolution.

Lesueur and I were assigned Room 6. Kerr and McLaughlin went into 5. Ralph Parker ended up with a room to himself. Norman and Colonel Hulls had been taken to the British Embassy a half mile up Kuibyshev's main street from the hotel.

Larry and I looked at the room and then at one another.

It held two ancient iron beds, both broken down in the middle and sagging almost to the floor. There was no private bath and no running water. Two huge double windows faced the street, Kuibyshev's main street. They were covered with ice, and the light from a single naked electric light bulb, suspended from a whitewashed ceiling, made the room look colder than it was. And it was cold. There was a large wardrobe, battered and scarred, and two small wooden desks. But at least we were off that train.

I couldn't change clothes for I had none save those I was wearing. Conscious that I was rather high, I went along with the others to supper.

"Don't sit downwind from me," I cautioned. "I smell very athletic."

At the dining room we met a short dark man with bright sparkling eyes and white gleaming teeth. He had a husky voice.

"Are you Mr. Gilmore?" he asked.

I gave him the facts.

He gave me his hand and said he was Sam Gurevich, a translator-secretary for the Associated Press.

"The boys," he explained, "should be back from the Embassy. In the meantime, won't you come and have a seat and I'll help you order dinner if I may."

He led us through two dining rooms full of eating, drinking, talking people. I asked why the dining rooms were arranged in this fashion, for by now we had entered a third.

"Second and third category," Sam explained. "You, of course, belong in the first-category dining room. This is it."

What the hell was this? I thought I was in a communistic country, where everyone was equal. I got the pitch that first night on dry land, so to speak, and from that time on, until I left Russia years later, I watched a rigid class system in operation. It never changed.

The other correspondents who'd been having a Thanksgiving dinner at the Embassy arrived in the midst of our meal. I knew only one of them personally but all of them by name. Cyrus Sulzberger and I had worked in Washington together back in the early years of the Roosevelt administration. It was good to see this highly individualistic individual and first-rate reporter again. I ate my dinner between Henry Cassidy, the AP's competent bureau chief in Russia, and the translator Gurevich. I never enjoyed a meal more.

About the time of the meat course I noticed four old and tired-looking men climb onto a bandstand down at one end of the room.

"Wait until you hear this," cautioned Cassidy. "This band is the worst part of living in the Grand Hotel."

They began to play. I recognized the tune as "Tipperary."

That's the best I can say for the band. That I was able to recognize the tune.

Upstairs, after our first meal, lashings of vodka and "Tipperary," Henry Shapiro, chief of the United Press bureau, invited us into his suite. By comparison with everyone else's it was sumptuous, consisting of a long, large living room with radio and an adjoining small room he used as a bedroom. He produced several bottles of scotch and we appropriately celebrated our arrival on the Volga on Thanksgiving evening, 1941.

Less than three weeks later the same group sat on the third floor of the American Embassy—a tall, narrow, gray brick building that had been a public school but a few weeks before the evacuation to Kuibyshev. We sat there more or less silently listening to the stunning news of Pearl Harbor. Bewildered, we returned to the Grand Hotel, entered the first-category dining room, and went through the extremely unpleasant experience of listening to and watching a group of Japanese diplomats, army and naval officers, and correspondents get drunk celebrating what happened at Pearl Harbor. The next night, back at the Embassy, we listened to the German radio broadcast Hitler's declaration of war on the United States.

"Life is awfully strange," observed a middle-aged man with a short beard sitting across the room from me. "You know, I was in this very same town when I heard the news of President Woodrow Wilson's declaration of war against Germany in 1917."

No one said anything.

"Very strange, indeed," he said as he rose and left the room muttering to himself. I asked who he was and was told that he was one of the American Red Cross men and that he'd

been a Red Cross man in Samara twenty-four years before. They called him "Bob" and I thought him quite a fellow.

I remembered John O'Hara's quotation about an appointment in Samarra, and while I knew that Samarra wasn't this one, I couldn't resist from thinking how this place was a city of destiny too, at least for Bob and maybe the rest of us.

As we heard this news the Germans were still knocking the Soviet's western front to pieces. The news from the Middle East was none too good. The news from the Far East was awful. We had visions of being trapped between the Germans advancing from the west and the Japs eventually attacking Russia and coming in from the east. We unfolded the old maps again and began plotting a way to get out. Others talked about going home to enlist in the armed forces. Being a child of a corporation, I knew the AP would decide what I'd be doing.

I believe it was the next afternoon that the Soviet press published stories about "friendly volunteer divisions" from the Mongolian People's Republic rushing to the western front to help their "Soviet brothers." We wrote stories about this development and gave them some emphasis, pointing out what staunch fighters were the Mongolians. What splendid horsemen. What wonderful shots with a rifle.

That same night I met an incredible man, A. T. Chorleton, onetime Cambridge don, then correspondent for the London *Daily Telegraph.*

Chorleton was a nervous man, highly articulate, and, as the British say, "long in the teeth." He spoke rapidly and none too distinctly and into a long black beard which turned out to be a fascinating adornment for a number of American war correspondents. They always mentioned Chorleton in their books and, of course, made numerous comments upon

his beard. A very wise reviewer once reviewed the books of three of these correspondents under the single heading, "Mr. Chorleton's Beard."

But there it was, and there was Mr. Chorleton, scratching first his beard and then the seat of his trousers, walking up and down and talking incessantly and often brilliantly.

"Mongolian divisions," he was saying as I entered the room. His voice was heavy with sarcasm. "I have the entire bloody Mongolian Embassy staying on my floor in this hotel. I have to use the same lavatory as they do. They moved in today."

He wheeled and walked towards the other end of the room, mumbling and scratching, and some of his words I didn't hear.

But I did hear this:

"Those bloody Mongolians and their divisions. Why, they stand on the toilet seat and you should see how they've mucked up the men's room. If they can't aim with their rifles any better than they can with their rear ends, then it's precious little help they're going to be to the Russians in this war. Wonderful shots indeed!"

I raised up off the end of my sagging bed, from which I'd watched and listened to the old don. Kuibyshev did have its compensations. I felt better already.

8

In the winter of 1941 the U.S.S.R. had a commercial airline open to Teheran, in Persia, and for foreigners this was the only door to the outside world.

After Pearl Harbor a number of the British and American

correspondents who'd been forced by the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to leave Moscow for Kuibyshev decided to quit the Volga for other destinations. They had good reason, for the Soviets were just letting us sit in the Grand Hotel. No trips were being organized to the front. The Russians took the view that unless they were winning there was nothing at the front to show a foreign correspondent. And they definitely were not winning. The greatest land war in history was on and here we were in this miserable town at least 650 miles from the shooting and no indications we were ever going to get to the front. The press department held regular press conferences, and Solomon Lozovsky, a Deputy Commissar of Foreign Affairs who used to peddle matches in Belorussia before the Revolution, weekly peddled what passed for official news to the foreign newspapermen. But there were slim pickings at those press conferences and many of the men whose job it was to cover a war were getting restless.

Some of them decided to leave and got permission from their home offices.

Philip Jordan, an English journalist, more frustrated than others, was one of the first to go. In the Persian capital the first telegram he wrote to his London office began:

TEHERAN, DEC. 16—FREED FROM THE INTOLERABLE BURDEN OF SOVIET CENSORSHIP I CAN NOW PREDICT THAT THE RED ARMY WILL EVENTUALLY WIN THE WAR.

Many correspondents felt that bitterly about it. The censorship was severe.

The Kuibyshev corps shrank considerably with the mid-December departures, but there were enough of us left to let go a huzzah when the press department informed us just be-

fore Christmas that we were going back to Moscow. I say we, but that we didn't include me. For some reason the Soviets decided that only one man per news agency could be in Moscow. The other must remain in Kuibyshev. I suppose they wanted someone on the Volga should there be diplomatic news to cover. In any case that meant that Meyer Handler of the United Press and I would remain in Kuibyshev while the heads of our respective bureaus, the two Henrys, Cassidy and Shapiro, would go back to the capital.

They went. We stayed. Just the two of us.

With time on our hands, Meyer and I began to take an interest in other facets of Grand Hotel life. We commenced visiting, careful always not to enter the rooms of the four Japanese correspondents living in the hostelry. Two of them actually had the next room to mine, and as we met them on the stairway, or in the narrow corridors, or in the first-category dining room, we studiously looked through one another.

One of them, the Domei man, was actually to become a good friend of mine in Moscow after the war. Nightly they celebrated back in those late days of 1941.

Sam Gurevich, the translator-secretary who translated the first real dinner I ever had in Russia, also remained in Kuibyshev. And with him his wife, Alexandra. They held court in their room every evening in the Grand.

The Gureviches were gay and spoke English. Sam, in fact, was a hell of a fellow. He'd lived in the United States as a boy and his family and the family of Leon Trotsky had been friends. They'd returned to Russia together after the Revolution and Sam used to tell me stories of how he, as a boy, often visited the Kremlin with Trotsky's son. He recalled one evening a boyhood conversation he'd had with Lenin inside the

Kremlin walls. I forget the substance of it, but I remember that Sam said Lenin gave him some good advice on how to get the best possible speed out of a sled. Sam, on that occasion, was sledding on a Kremlin hill.

One night we walked into the Gurevich room and found a card game in progress—Alexandra and Sam and two other men. One of these men looked very familiar to me. He had a huge head, a drooping walrus mustache, and intelligent, though extremely suspicious eyes. He was of middle stature with fairly long black hair. The other man was short, dark, and obviously Jewish. The Gureviches spoke and motioned us to chairs, but didn't introduce us to the two men. I looked at Handler and saw that he too was interested in the one with the big, thick, walrus mustache. Finally, Meyer spoke up.

"I say," he asked, "aren't you Mikhail Borodin?"

The card players paused in their game. The one with the mustache said something in Russian.

"He says he doesn't speak English," Gurevich translated.

After a while Handler and I got up and left.

"I'm sure that's Mikhail Borodin," he said.

"You mean the guy who tried to organize China for the Communists?" I asked.

"That's the one," said Meyer, "and imagine his telling me he doesn't speak English. Why, he ran an English school for years in Chicago. I know. I used to see him."

"And the other guy?"

"I know him, too. He's Boris Efimov, the Soviet Union's top political cartoonist. He's the one who does those things in *Pravda* of Hitler and Goering. Not bad."

Boris Efimov is still the leading political cartoonist of the Soviet press. During the height of the hate-America cam-

paign he drew the same sort of vicious caricatures of former President Truman, Dean Acheson, George Marshall, and General MacArthur that he used to draw of the Nazi leaders. But, like so many other Russians, he has to sing for his supper. In his case, to be strictly correct, he draws for his supper and he draws exceedingly well.

The next day we received the good news of Timoshenko's victory around Rostov-on-Don and then the heartening announcement about the Russian victory outside the very gates of Moscow. As the days went by it became apparent that the Red Army had pulled off something really decisive around their capital. It was the first great Soviet victory of the war and free people everywhere must have been much encouraged, for there wasn't very much for the Western world to be happy about those days.

News from the Far East continued to be most depressing, with one Japanese victory after another and vast, rich lands being occupied by them.

It was during this period that I met Aludin, a dark-eyed full-bosomed beauty who described herself as a refugee from the Spanish Civil War. God knows who she really was. I'd seen her around the dining room. I believe she was a customer of dining-room category number three. As a Spanish refugee she would be, for that war was over and the Soviets, being very practical people, were forgetting it. The high-quality people of the present war, the Americans and the British, with special emphasis on the Americans, were category No. 1 people. But Aludin, I suppose, was lucky to be eating in the Grand Hotel at all. She spoke some English, which was more than most of the people around the Grand did, and in a place like that this was reason enough to strike up a friendship. We did.

Aludin had very pretty white teeth and very red lips and she laughed a lot. I told someone at the American Embassy I thought she was beautiful. I remember the answer:

"When the chambermaids at the Grand Hotel begin to look good," he said, "then, boy, you've been in Russia too long."

I explained that Aludin was no chambermaid.

"What I said still goes," he added.

She looked more beautiful than ever to me one night in late December just before Christmas. A night during which we'd been playing poker and listening to a Polish captain—also a resident of the Grand—play the guitar. His name was Josef, as I remember, and for some reason (it must have been his thick blond mane and his ecclesiastical look) I dubbed him St. Joseph of Volokolamsk. During his stay and mine at the Grand Hotel he always remained St. Joseph of Volokolamsk to me.

Well, St. Joseph of Volokolamsk was stroking his guitar and singing sad Polish songs. I had my arm around Aludin and she didn't seem to mind. Four or five others in the room were drinking tea and vodka and talking in about four different languages. I recall one of the company was a Yugoslav with a fierce black mustache and a big belly. Another was a Greek girl with large luminous eyes and a splendid figure. And a Polish girl who obviously was sleeping with St. Joseph and didn't want anyone else to. She was violently jealous of him.

It must have been Aludin's room for, after the others had gone, she dragged an old, hand-winding phonograph from under a bed and, after searching through a stack of battered records, put on something that I recognized as "Yes, Sir, That's My Baby."

We began to dance and Aludin was wearing a large red artificial rose on her dress. It did not encourage close dancing.

"Look," I said, "why don't you take off that damned rose?"

Aludin raised her soft eyes.

"Why don't we take off this damned dress?" she asked.

And she did.

It was long after that evening that I met a pretty, petite Chinese girl named Miss Hong. She didn't speak much English, and as my Chinese was extremely limited, our conversation was rather straightforward and to the point.

"Missa Gilmore," she said to me one night in the Grand Hotel dinning room, category No. 1, "you wanna come wis me to Ulanov?"

I was aware that Ulanov, the birthplace of Lenin, was also on the Volga and an overnight train trip.

"Yes, Miss Hong, very much, but I tried to get a room on the train and they wouldn't sell me one."

"You know Missa Smit?" she asked.

I assumed she meant Homer Smith, a tall dignified American Negro correspondent who was to become a good friend of mine.

"Homer Smith?" I asked, although I didn't understand just how he came into this.

"Ya, Gomer Smit," she said, "but you don worry about room on train. Me have room on train. You come Ulanov wis me. You come my room. Nice?"

I hastened to inform her that I thought this arrangement would be charming. That the AP wanted me to get to see the countryside around Kuibyshev even if it was very cold.

"Ya," said Miss Hong, blinking her pretty little eyes at me. I noticed at that moment how pretty and dainty she was. "Ya,

you come wis me this week. I ast Missa Gomer Smit. He no can come. Now I ast you. Mebee you come, ya?"

Miss Hong remained in Russia a long time. She later became a great friend of one of Chiang Kai-shek's ambassadors to Moscow, but the last I heard of her, she'd returned to China and was helping edit a Communist newspaper. Too sad in more ways than one.

Aludin and Miss Hong and St. Joseph of Volokolamsk, the sad, guitar-playing Pole, Mikhail Borodin, who later disappeared into the cold Moscow night, and we figured, perhaps correctly, that he'd been arrested. And Boris Efimov, who's still operating. And Sam Gurevich who, during the repulsive anti-Semitic campaign in Russia in the late winter of 1952, was denounced as a spy and a traitor (and of course jailed). And the band at the Grand. And those three-category rooms. What characters to people the memory of a mid-December on the Volga!

Just before Christmas, when the other correspondents were still in Moscow and Handler and I were still in Kuibyshev, Charles Thayer, second secretary at the American Embassy, and Captain James Boswell, an assistant military attaché at the Embassy, invited me to a Christmas party.

The Bolshoi Theatre, which after the revolution took over where the Imperial Ballet left off, had also been evacuated to Kuibyshev. This meant a lot of ballerinas were in town. They too had been asked to this Christmas party. As a matter of fact, the Christmas party, as organized, was for them. Thayer and Boswell, and some others whose names I do not remember—but there were not many of them for this was going to be a very select party—and I were the hosts.

"Gilmore," said Captain Boswell, who by now must at least be a colonel or a general, "will be Santa Claus for the girls."

I set him straight on that one.

"Oh, no, I won't. We'll get John Trant," I said. "He's a former actor, and furthermore he'd like to do it."

The point of having a Santa Claus was this. At an appointed hour he would come into the room where the beautiful ballerinas and the above mentioned Americans were enjoying themselves and amid much Christmas cheer, Santa would distribute presents to the beautiful, lonesome ballerinas who, by that time, would be squealing with joy, excitement, and vodka. At least that was the way we planned it.

Getting presents for ballerinas in Kuibyshev in those days was no small task for the stores had practically nothing to sell. Inflation was rampant and prices as high as the blue heaven on a cold day.

I inquired how many ballerinas we were having.

"Thirty-one have definitely accepted," said Thayer, "and there are two more who may come."

We agreed we'd need not only a lot of presents but lots of money.

The man who was doing most of the work on this Christmas party, including the main contact with the ballerinas, was a fellow named Morris Seltzer. He was born in the U.S.A., had been a waiter on ships, and found what he thought was the promised land one day when his vessel tied up in Leningrad. He secured a job in a Moscow hotel making three times more money than he did on his American ship and his future was bright. He left the ship and took out Soviet citizenship. When the United States sent William Bullitt to Moscow as its first Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., Morris Seltzer had been shifted from his Moscow hotel work to the post of valet and man of odd jobs for the Ambassador. Morris

was of average height and width, about thirty-five, as energetic as a jet-propelled beaver, helpful if he liked you, and spoke English and Russian equally badly. He had an accent right out of a burlesque show and it was all the more amusing because his voice was raw and raspy. Morris was an unforgettable character and in my years in the Soviet Union he did me a thousand small favors, willingly, and apparently gladly, and I shall always remember him as one of the most thoroughly delightful people I've ever known.

He was detailed to get the presents for the ballerinas' Christmas party and he spent hours and wads of our money combing the shops for the gifts.

Morris also maintained a liaison with the ballerinas—thirty-one definitely accepted and two more who might come. He told us daily and in graphic detail just how the girls were anxiously awaiting the party.

I was to get Trant, the former actor, to play Santa Claus and to teach him his part and his lines.

In addition to being a onetime thespian, Trant was His Majesty's consul general in the U.S.S.R. He definitely was not an Englishman, but an Irishman and extremely proud of the fact. His days as an actor had included a number of years in stock and a trip through the American Middle West on which he'd played something dashing and important in Sheridan's *The Rivals.*

His Majesty's consul general was about five feet three inches tall. He was round around the middle as a proper Santa Claus should be. He wore steel-rimmed spectacles which gave him the look of a salacious owl. He weighed about 225 pounds, which, for a man of his small height, was considerable.

Trant readily agreed to be Santa Claus, especially when I

emphasized the presence of thirty-one ballerinas definitely accepted and two more who might come and then let it be known there would be only four or five Americans and no one from any other embassy present.

I gave him a Santa Claus costume that some former ambassador had left behind, told him to let himself into the little red brick house where Thayer was living—and where we were going to have the party—and to wait downstairs in a room just off the foyer. A bottle of scotch, I assured him, would be placed there for his sole use.

"Be there at ten o'clock," I said, "and we'll come down and get you about ten-fifteen."

John said he would be there. On the dot.

Came Christmas Eve, the night of the party. I borrowed some clothes from Charles Dickerson, embassy first secretary, and did my best to look dressed up. Party time was eight o'clock.

We assembled about seven-thirty to look over the arrangements. The presents were all on hand and wrapped, a ballerina's name on each of them, the tree handsomely decorated. The punch was ample and strong. Roast cold chicken and goose reposed on the dining-room table and there were ham and sardines and other things to eat. In addition to the punch we had choice Burgundy, vodka, champagne, and scotch. Our spirits were high, but they slumped somewhat about eight-forty when no one arrived.

Morris alone looked unworried.

"Dey'll be here soon," he shouted. Morris never talked in a conversational tone. He ranged between a half shout and an extra-loud shout. "Don worry, dey'll be here soon. Dey dying to com."

At nine-ten we suggested that Morris had better take a car

and scout out the place where we knew the ballerinas lived, a sort of dormitory down by the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs.

Reluctantly, he left.

While we waited we sampled the punch. We kept looking at our watches—nine-thirty, nine-forty. At nine-fifty the door downstairs opened. We recognized Morris' voice and—at least some female voices. He came up the stairs, beaming, a ballerina on each arm. We greeted them profusely.

An hour later the pair of ballerinas, beautiful to be sure, were still our only guests, and one of them, after three or four large glasses of Burgundy, broke the bad news that they'd probably be the only guests from the Bolshoi Theatre Ballet that Christmas Eve.

"But why?" one of us asked.

This was all going on in Russian, but I was getting a fair though dejected translation from a tall thin young man, a civilian employee of the military attaché's office who was known, quite simply and appropriately I thought, as "G 6."

The two ballerinas were not sure at first just why the other girls were not coming, but as the evening wore on and we got around to the champagne, one of them courageously explained, "Because they are afraid."

Afraid of what, we asked.

"Of you. You are foreigners."

"But not any more. We are allies. We are all in this war together," I said, and I asked G 6 to translate for me. He did, and that Russian girl gave me a look I shall not forget. I didn't quite understand it then, but I know now what it meant.

She was really sorry for my stupidity.

In our sorrow we had forgotten His Majesty's consul gen-

eral downstairs, and I'm sure it was not because he remembered him that G 6 went below. I don't think he even knew John Trant was playing Santa Claus for us.

Now, G 6 was a pleasant, mild-mannered young man when sober, but charged with spirit, he was a tiger. Trant also was a gentle soul, but tired of waiting and being neglected and having consumed nearly the entire bottle we'd left for him as he sat there ready for action in the ambassadorial Santa Claus costume, he too was not a person to be trifled with.

G 6 reached the door of the room in which sat the consul general. He looked inside and he swayed as he stared at the portly figure who sat there in red and white, a false beard, and a bad temper. Dangling from one hand was a heavy tumbler, half filled with whisky.

At last G 6 broke the silence.

"I know you," he said. "You're no Santa Claus. You're a goddamned Englishman!"

Those were fighting words for His Majesty's consul general, an Irish gentleman. He jumped to his feet, flung down the glass and false beard, and sprang upon G 6. He clutched him by the throat and hurled him to the floor. Before the consul general's pudgy but strong fingers began to throttle him, G 6 let out one terrible, piercing yell of terror. That summoned us from our sad little party upstairs. We tumbled down the steps and found the Irishman astraddle G 6 choking the daylights out of him. There must have been thirty years' difference in their ages, but His Majesty's consul general, at fifty-six, had squeezed all the fight out of the much lighter G 6.

That was Christmas in Kuibyshev, 1941.

9

I visited the Russian-German front for the first time during the awful cold of January 1942.

We drove in old automobiles from Moscow to Mozhaisk escorted by three officials of the press department and several Red Army officers. In command of our convoy was Nikolai G. Palgunov, now director of Tass, telegraphic agency of the Soviet Union, then head of the press section. Palgunov, called the Goon for more reasons than the fact that his name is accented on the second syllable, is an amazing man. No matter what trouble other officials get into, no matter how abrupt the shift in the party line, the Goon goes on. He is a very shifty fellow, tricky in the open field, and all in all not a bad individual.

Mozhaisk is an old town about sixty miles west of the Soviet capital, and at that time the German Army had been turned away from the place after what we saw described in official dispatches as a terrible battle in which both sides lost many men.

When we reached Mozhaisk late one afternoon the Wehrmacht was about twelve miles to the west, down the old Smolensk road. Approaching Mozhaisk, on the broad highway between Mozhaisk and Moscow, there were many signs that armies had passed that way.

Abandoned tanks, nearly all of them German, lay along the roadside, and as we neared Mozhaisk we saw many wooden crosses above freshly dug graves. Some of them had German helmets sitting on top of the crosses.

Darkness had fallen when we reached our destination. Off

in the west the horizon would light up with flashes from the big guns. There was a constant rumble of cannon, and it may have been my imagination, but I thought I heard a shell go over as our Soviet conductors led us to a schoolhouse in the deep snow. There we were assigned rooms for the night. The next morning we were to go to the front.

There wasn't much sleep that night, but there was plenty of vodka, and by early breakfast time the following morning at least three of the comrade correspondents were heavily and painfully hung over. No matter. We loaded into our automobiles and started off for the army dining room located near the outskirts of the town. A good hot breakfast awaited us, and, of course, there was more vodka.

By 9:00 A.M.—departure time for the front—one of our number decided he was too sleepy for the trip. Two others confessed they were extremely tired and sleepy, but they insisted on going along.

We asked the colonel in charge of our party the temperature and he told us it was 52 degrees below zero. That was the coldest I ever saw it in Russia. I wore two pairs of heavy underwear, two flannel shirts, a pair of fur-lined boots, and two pairs of heavy stockings. I had fur-lined gloves next to my hands and a pair of heavy mittens with wind-repellent cloth over these. I also wore a long jacket of Grenfell cloth and a big fur cap with flaps that let down over my ears and neck.

I was never able to discover what animal that fur came from. The closest I could get in translation was "sea beast." Whatever it was it was warm. Even with the mercury at 52 below.

Negley Farson and Eric McLaughlin were my companions in one automobile, and before we'd gone very far it was ap-

parent that Farson was in bad shape in that cold. He looked blue, and when I asked him how he felt he didn't answer. There was no such thing as a heater in our automobile and the farther we went the colder Negley got. I signaled for the driver to stop the car. We were in convoy so this meant all the other cars halted. I called for one of the press department men to examine poor Negley.

"Mr. Farson," he said quite simply, "is cold. His nose is beginning to get white."

We decided we'd better send him back to the warm schoolhouse. Wisely, Negley made no objection. This veteran correspondent, author of one of the most readable books in the English language, *Way of a Transgressor,* still suffered from a serious leg injury received when flying with the old Royal Flying Corps in Egypt during the first world war. He was older than any of us and, considering his injury, he was a very brave fellow to have come along at all on such a cold day.

Two of us got him out of the car and headed him for a smaller automobile, one that was to take him back to Mozhaisk. And then, out there in the ice and snow, he just collapsed on the road. We knew we had to act quickly to prevent him from freezing, and a press department censor named Skvartsov put action to thought. He dove under Negley's large and prone body to protect him from the ice and instructed us to lift.

Farson weighed well over two hundred pounds. He was hard and muscular, and with all his clothes he was some bundle. But we got him into the car after a struggle, and muffled in blankets, he went off in the direction of Mozhaisk, a driver beside him.

McLaughlin, the Australian, by now purple in the face and

suffering from the sub-zero temperatures, decided to stay with the convoy. We rubbed his hands and slapped his face, and when we finally began to walk he recovered.

Many times I have marveled at the efforts correspondents make to cover news stories. I have also wondered if the readers ever realize just how tough it is to cover events in the far corners of the world, some of which never make the headlines. But the good newspaperman never thinks about that. He assumes that every story is page 1 and a headline. When you lose that approach I believe you lose much of a newsman's essential make-up.

The closer we got to the actual front the more tanks we saw. German tanks. Several hundred of them. Silent and cold along the snowy roadside. I got out and examined many of them. It was a strange situation, not at all what I expected. No bullet holes in the tanks. No bomb craters around them. Just frozen. Frozen stiff and solid from lack of proper oil. The Soviet antitank gunners didn't have to hit those tanks. That Russian winter took care of them.

The dead?

Very few. Here and there a body frozen beside the road and in the strangest imaginable position. Like tossed-away toys in a child's room. With their hands and arms in the oddest contortions, a surprised look on their faces. I looked them over carefully. Just like the tanks. No bullet holes. Frozen.

We tramped up and down the front. The big guns and the troops were still a few miles ahead of us. But for my part we were close enough. Especially in that searing cold. We were on historic ground, for it was just here that Napoleon had defeated the Russian forces in the battle of Borodino. We visited the building that had once been the Borodino mu-

seum. The Germans had set fire to it. Many of its treasures lay in the ashes still smoldering and warm. I walked several miles that day and I don't think I saw over a dozen German dead. And all of these were frozen.

Our escorts finally had enough. They ordered us back into the automobiles and we returned to Mozhaisk. There we sat in a warm room and listened to an infantry colonel describe the ferocious fight for the city. He told us how two huge armies struggled against one another, locked in a death grip in the snow and cold just three days before.

"Over a hundred thousand German invaders were destroyed here," he said.

A correspondent asked him what had become of their bodies, adding that we'd like to see them as part of our job of reporting a war.

The colonel hesitated. Just for an instant.

"They are buried," he replied.

Now we had arrived in Mozhaisk just after this battle described as so terrible. It was inconceivable that the Russians had buried nearly a hundred thousand Germans, not to mention their own soldiers, in three days.

"We'd like to see their graves," said Walter Kerr.

"Ah," said the Red Army officer. "There was a heavy snow. The graves are covered. Completely covered. You couldn't see a thing."

"In that case we'd like to see the snow-covered graves," one of us told him.

"Impossible," came back the colonel with finality. "What you ask is impossible. There are no roads."

That ended the discussion about the hundred thousand dead Germans and it stuck the first big question mark in my mind about the Soviet war claims.

Every army, I suppose, goes in for a certain amount of exaggeration in wartime. But a hundred thousand dead. Here was something truly colossal.

Later in the day we found an old church in Mozhaisk. Its doors were open and it hadn't been damaged. We asked a peasant about it.

"This church," he explained, "has been closed for a long time. It was closed until the Germans arrived and opened it."

The men from the press department heard the remark and they surrounded the peasant and questioned him at length, but he stuck to his story—that the Germans opened the church.

I asked him what became of the priest.

"He went away with the Germans," he told me.

"You mean the Germans took him away," said one of the censors.

"No," said the stubborn old peasant. "They didn't take him away. He begged to go along with them."

All of this was through translators. We had at least two correspondents with us who spoke and understood Russian perfectly and I stuck close to one of them asking him to repeat slowly everything that was said.

It was at Mozhaisk that I saw and talked to my first German prisoners of the war. The press department, with Palgunov at the head, led us to them. They were a sorry-looking lot, assembled for our inspection in an empty brick building.

Their clothes and footwear were wholly inadequate for a Russian winter. And they were so small. We got each man to give his name, his previous occupation, and what sort of work he was doing for the Wehrmacht. None were professional

soldiers. They'd been drafted into the Army. They were cooks, commissary clerks, and a sprinkling of musicians. No officers were among them. They said they had been placed in positions in buildings and told to stay there. This they did until the Soviets came and captured them.

There had been a great deal of material in the Moscow papers about the fierce Soviet partisans in this part of the country. How they'd harried and fought the German invaders.

We asked them about the partisans. These Germans didn't seem to know what we were talking about.

"The civilians, the people of Mozhaisk," I asked, "didn't they cause you a great deal of trouble by their resistance?"

The prisoners shook their heads.

"No," said one of them. "The people here were very nice."

I was getting a mild shock.

We walked through the streets of the city. Many of its buildings had been blown up. The people told us this had been done by the Germans before they left. We saw two statues of Lenin and Stalin that had been sawed in two. Right across their middles. The legs stood on pedestals. Pieces of heads and torsos lay in the nearby snow.

That night in the blackout we were led to a little wooden hut and there, by kerosene lamps, we were welcomed by two striking-looking men in the uniforms of generals of the Red Army.

One was General, now Marshal, Leonid Govorov, the man who later broke the German blockade of Leningrad.

The other was General Volkov, who a few months later joined up with the Germans and foolishly led a Russian battalion, or regiment against the Red Army in the hope of helping to liberate his homeland from Joseph Stalin Communism.

At the end of the war the Allies turned this man over to the Soviets and he met a horrible death as a traitor.

We left Mozhaisk the following morning and I'd been in my hotel room only a few hours when I was called by the press department and asked to come to a certain room at the Hotel Moskva. Here other correspondents and I found a man dressed in the garb of a Russian Orthodox priest. Palgunov, the press department chief, and a couple of translators were with him.

Through a translator, Palgunov explained this was the missing priest from Mozhaisk. The one that an ignorant peasant told us had fled with the Germans.

We questioned this man at length. He appeared to be terribly embarrassed, and his answers to our many questions were not very satisfactory.

I, of course, do not know the answer to this incident. I present it for what it's worth, but I left the Hotel Moskva, as I'd left Mozhaisk, with gnawing doubts about certain things that Soviets had been telling us and the world at large.

10

Moscow in January and February 1942 was an unusual city.

There was a blackout, of course. Uniformed policemen patrolled the middle of the streets in pairs. An eleven-o'clock curfew prevailed, but three of us, all agency correspondents who had to work around the clock, had passes.

Normally a city of five or six million, only about one third of the population was living there at this time. Food was extremely difficult to get, even for such favored people as

American and British correspondents. Everything was rationed. But we had a special store in which to trade with our, comparatively speaking, excellent ration books. Even at that I lost weight consistently and was nearly always hungry. Only one restaurant was operating that I knew of and it on a sort of speak-easy basis. The front door was always closed, but if they knew you they'd let you in. And there, in the Aragvi Restaurant, you could buy all kinds of wonderful things. Shashlyk and beefsteak and roast beef and pheasant. White bread and butter and caviar and vodka. Red and white wines and champagne and cognac. Oranges and apples and coffee with sugar and tea with lemon.

The price?

About a hundred dollars for a dinner at the official ruble rate, but it was a good dinner and had it not been for the Aragvi many of us would have lost much more weight than we did.

We would go to the Aragvi about once a week, and after stuffing our stomachs we would pack everything left on the table in our pockets and take it back to the Metropole Hotel.

Metropole Hotel. Ah, Mother Metropole. That's where we lived and worked. And the Metropole was practically ours, for there were very few people living there except the foreign correspondents and their translators, who, for some reason or another, insisted on being called secretaries. Class consciousness again.

One night in early January I heard the faint but distinct strains of a jazz band. I can detect a band at any distance under twenty miles. Here was a band somewhere in the Metropole and it was playing jazz of a sort. I hunted it out and found it going full blast atop a loft bandstand in a chilly,

spacious place that had obviously once served as the grand ballroom of the hotel.

Several hundred young people were dancing.

I scurried back to the second floor and alerted Larry Lesueur, Walter Kerr, and Meyer Handler. Together we went to the ballroom, the jazz, and the dancing. The doorman smilingly ushered us in. No tickets were necessary for the Americans. Just walk inside, comrades, and grab a girl.

This wasn't as easy as it sounded. But it wasn't hard, especially after word swept around the floor that we were American correspondents.

By now all of us spoke some Russian. Even I. And it was great fun trying it out on these Russian girls, the first ones I'd really come into contact with. I had a perfectly splendid time with a raven-haired, black-eyed girl who claimed she was a Gypsy. I suppose she was, for she could dance with a gusto that reminded you of golden earrings and campfires. And she was one of the most uninhibited creatures I ever met. I was very much attracted to Lolichka.

After the dance, Lolichka, another girl named Basia, and a young Russian man who later became a star dancer at the Bolshoi Theatre, ended up in my room—I shall never forget the number—*dva seem chatery* (274) on the second floor of Mother Metropole.

Lolichka could speak some English, which was fortunate, for after midnight my Russian became nonexistent.

"Vy don chu go bad?" she asked. "Chu ees tirret."

"I am tired," I told her, "and you sound like Greta Garbo in *Ninotchka*, where she tells the butler, 'Go hum, leedle fadder, you are tired.'"

"Chu crazee," said Lolichka. "I no Greeta Garbo. You no butler. You Eddy. I Lolichka. We all go bad."

The next morning I woke up and discovered that if Lolichka had stayed the night there were no signs of her now. The same for Basia. There was a terrible smell in the room though, and when I turned on the light I discovered the young Russian man—who was to become the ballet star—lying in my other bed, alone and quietly, but definitely, vomiting.

Vodka, the national firewater, had been too much for Serge. Vodka mixed with Americans and Gypsies. I didn't feel any too good either and it was a great struggle to get myself together, to tune my ear in to the strange English of my translator, Madame Sophia Tchchova. It was time to pound out a day lead about the Russian side of the greatest land war in history.

"Our troobs," she read from the midday communiqué, "okkupied fife populated punts and ve pooshed bek de enemee avrayvair!"

(She was saying, "Our troops occupied five populated points and we pushed back the enemy everywhere.")

Somehow I got out that day lead and went back to the Metropole from the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, where we twice daily received the communiqués. At the front desk of the hotel I was met by the icy stare of one of the lady administrators.

"Meester Gilmore," she said sternly, "you vas seek in your rum last night."

"Madame," I replied, "I am sick right now, sick on my feet."

"Plees," she said with mounting alarm, "don be seek hair in de lobby off de hotel. Go, plees, to your rum."

On the way to the room I had to mount a flight of stairs that led past the glass panel that formed the back of the

bandstand on which the jazz of the night before had been played. I smiled and I brightened and felt better as I thought of Lolichka and all those bright, happy people in the midst of all this cold and hunger and the terrible war.

I even felt kindly about Serge, the dancer who, thank God, had gone when I arrived at *dva seem chatery.*

Maybe Russia wasn't going to be so bad after all.

11

The press department hurried us back to Kuibyshev as suddenly as it had taken us to Moscow. Just one day's advance notice. But getting us to Kuibyshev by train in late March 1942 turned out to be difficult, for a terrible snowstorm caught us two days out of the capital.

It swept in on us as the old, slow train started up one of the few long hills in this part of western Russia. The engine gasped to a walk and then, with the snow piled up high in front of it, just stopped altogether. The engineer tried to reverse. He got a few yards and the snow caught him from behind. We were trapped.

All night long we remained on that hill. There were optimistic announcements every few minutes. Another engine had been sent for. It would be along in no time at all. A snowplow was coming. It was just a few miles away. This eventually proved to be true. About forty or fifty people from a nearby collective farm, rounded up and designated as a road crew, arrived sleepy-eyed on the scene and dug us out with shovels. Most of them were women and girls. More trouble faced us. Charging the snow-covered hill, we'd run

out of fuel. At the next station the engine backed into a siding beside a large woodpile.

It came as something of a shock that here was an engine, in 1942, still burning wood. A Russian explained that it was not strictly a wood burner, but that as coal was very scarce, the railways were turning to wood except for the most essential trains. Things were getting that tough.

It was a beautiful morning. The sun was shining brightly after the big snowstorm. The day wasn't particularly cold. The fireman and the engineer were loading the engine by themselves and, obviously, that was going to take a long time. We strolled over, about ten of us, and started helping the two men. They were pleased.

A tortured yell rose from the doorstep of one of the sleeping cars. Gesticulating wildly, one of the press department officials jumped off the steps and stumbled towards us through the deep snow.

"Stop! Stop! You must not do this!"

"Do what?"

"You know what you are doing," said the press department man. "You are forbidden to do this."

We told the censor that the engineer and the fireman didn't seem to mind. On the contrary they seemed pleased that we were helping them. That the sooner we got the engine fueled up the quicker we'd be on our way to Kuibyshev.

"All right," said the irate official, "but I serve notice on you right now that I will not pass a single story that mentions this incident."

The press department did the censoring in those days. Again the inferiority complex of the Soviet official was brought home to me.

To have it reported in the Western press that a Soviet train in this day and age was burning wood and that the passengers—foreign ones at that—were loading it, why that was unthinkable. A tremendous loss of face. Hadn't the Russian invented the steam engine? Weren't the Russians the greatest people in the world? Wasn't the Soviet economy—even under the stresses and strains of war—the very best in the world, far exceeding that of any capitalistic nation? Of course, comrades, and therefore this ugly incident about a wood-burning engine on a main-trunk railway line which had to be fueled by its own passengers didn't have a chance of being passed by the censor.

That train took six days to travel from Moscow to Kuibyshev, a distance of about five hundred miles, and it was going night and day. There was very little heat in the cars, and at one siding, when the night did get cold, one of our party froze the tip of her nose and another the lobe of an ear. Frostbite is not pleasant. The place that is affected swells to abnormality and it can give you trouble for months, and even years.

What fickle weather. When we reached the Volga it was April 1 and really spring. The sun had been out most of the time, but here in Kuibyshev it was out with dazzling brilliance. A soft, warm breeze blew from the south. We were in the middle of a huge thaw. Sounds as loud and sharp as rifle shots echoed across the river as the ice broke up. Thousands of people waded through the muddy streets to reach the high eastern bank of the Volga to stare at this annual scene. The long, dark Russian winter was over. Spring was here.

Later that month the press department announced a press conference with Mr. Lozovsky. The Japanese correspondents —who alone of all the foreign correspondents had not been

taken to Moscow on the last trip—were at the press conference in force. By now the Americans had made their famous air raid on Tokyo and one or two things were very obvious.

Handler and I had talked the situation over before going to Mr. Lozovsky's gathering. We knew from the BBC that all of our planes were not safe after that raid. It was simple arithmetic from looking at a map that some of them might have come down on Soviet far eastern territory. We asked about this at the American Embassy and the military and air attachés clammed up. The State Department boys said they knew nothing about it one way or the other. So when we went to the press conference Handler and I had some questions, the answers to which were certainly of interest to the American reading public.

"Mr. Lozovsky," asked Meyer, "what would be the position of the Soviet Government if an Allied plane should land on its territory?"

Lozovsky thought for a moment and said the plane and crew would be treated as any ally would.

"And what," I asked, "would be the position of the Soviet Government if a plane belonging to an ally of the U.S.S.R., yet an ally who was at war with a country with whom Russia was not at war, landed on Soviet territory?"

We were trying to make the Russian official reveal the position of the Soviet Government towards any American fliers and any American plane that might have landed on the U.S.S.R. after the Tokyo raid.

From the way the Deputy Commissar of Foreign Affairs squirmed in his chair and with the penetrating look he gave us as we continued to press him for an answer, we knew we'd hit something solid in that man's mind. The Japanese correspondents, sitting in the same room with us, followed up

the questions almost as closely as we did. Lozovsky was on a spot and he never gave us a straight answer. He ducked and dodged and he did it artfully.

"That question," he finally replied, "will be dealt with satisfactorily should it ever arise."

We couldn't prod him beyond that point.

The next day the Volga *Tribune* carried a small story on the third page saying an American bomber had landed on Soviet far eastern territory. That the crew had been questioned and their answers confirmed that the plane was one of those which took part in the raid on Tokyo. The paper added that the crew had been detained by Soviet authorities and the plane, which was not damaged, impounded.

Later in the morning I had a telephone call from the American Embassy. The military attaché wanted to see me. I hurried over and met Handler going in the embassy front door.

"Did you get called over here?" I asked him.

"Yes." Together we entered the military attaché's office.

"You guys," said that official, who is now dead, "are responsible for getting some American airmen thrown into jail. Do you realize that?" He was angry.

We asked him to explain.

"I have made inquiries," he replied, "and I understand you were the ones who raised the question of an Allied plane landing on Soviet soil at a press conference yesterday. Well, by doing this you've caused the jailing of those American boys."

I'm afraid I lost my temper at this point.

"To hell with that," I said. "You know very well that Handler and I came over to see you just a few days ago about this very case. We asked you point-blank if any American plane had landed on Soviet territory after the Tokyo raid

and what would happen to it and the crew if it had, and you shut up and wouldn't say a word."

"Of course I wouldn't," the M.A. interrupted. "That was top secret."

"Top secret, yes," Handler told him, "but if you were so worried about the fate of those boys and that plane why didn't you tell us about it off the record? If you'd done that we'd never have asked those questions of Lozovsky."

"All you had to do," I chimed in, "was to tell us the situation and ask us to lay off. And we would have laid off."

The military attaché switched his attack.

"I want to know who in this office leaked that information to you."

We told him not to be silly. That no one in his office, or any other office, leaked it to us.

Military men, as a rule, do not seem to realize that any fairly intelligent person can study a map and, under a given set of circumstances and conditions, can come fairly close to guessing the next move of an attacking or retreating army, the flight of a raiding air force, or a naval landing party.

We explained all this to the brigadier general, and after a while tempers cooled off on both sides.

We told the military attaché how deeply sorry we were that our questions to Lozovsky had forced the Russians to take a stand on the plane and its crew and agreed with him that had there been no mention of it at the press conference, and no publicity, the Soviets would, in all probability, have moved the Americans and the crew westward and released them all.

He, in turn, said he should have taken this into consideration and taken us into his confidence. He agreed that had he

done that the trouble would have been avoided. He later became one of my best friends and he told me and other correspondents many important things off the record, and the last time I talked to him about it he assured me no newspaperman had ever let him down.

Handler and I were more than distressed that anything we had done had caused the detention of our fellow Americans. That, of course, didn't do those poor fellows out in Vladivostok much good. But they got out eventually. The Soviets moved them westward in slow stages and then shifted them to Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, and finally "escaped them" across the Iranian frontier.

It was a well-kept secret and we never mentioned it in a dispatch.

The Russians even allowed the American Ambassador, Admiral William H. Standley, to visit them, permitted food to be sent to them regularly, and while this was all too infrequent, I'm sure it was better than it might have been.

I'm sorry unto this day that those questions led to their incarceration, and to any of those men who might read this report of how they happened to get jugged by the Russians —look, pal, I apologize. I hope it wasn't too tough.

12

One morning I went down to the barbershop in the Grand Hotel, Kuibyshev, to get a shave. I'd run out of razor blades, there was no place to buy any, and I was ashamed to borrow any more.

Sam, the translator, accompanied me.

As we entered the shop a loud row was in progress, and

when Russians stage these rows they are very loud indeed.

A Red Army sergeant was standing in front of one of the barbershop's two chairs. He and the barber were wildly waving their hands over a gray-haired man with lather on his face. The gray-haired man was sitting on one of the shop's two chairs.

"What's the trouble?" I asked Sam.

He listened for a moment or two and said the sergeant was in a hurry and was demanding that the barber cut his hair and shave him immediately.

"He wants the barber to take him now, turn the man with the lather on his face out of the chair, and finish up on him later."

I asked Sam if this was common practice.

"Yes," replied the translator, "the Red Army man has preference here. He's right. A war's on and soldiers don't have to stand behind civilians for anything."

The Red Army noncommissioned officer finally got his way and the lathered man rose from the chair—but not without protest—and with the barber's cloths still tucked around his neck, walked to a chair against one wall and sat down. He muttered to himself as he tried to wipe the drying lather from his face.

He was very familiar. I knew I'd seen that face somewhere. It was a square face, and lined. His eyes were large and his lips were rather large and red. Then it came to me. This was Alexander Troyanovsky, the Soviet Union's first Ambassador to the United States. I'd interviewed him one time on his impressions of an American political convention. I remembered the occasion well. It had been at the Republican National Convention, Cleveland, Ohio, in 1936. The convention that nominated Alf Landon for the presidency and Am-

bassador Troyanovsky, with his family, had journeyed from Washington for the final day of the balloting.

It came back so vividly.

I recalled how I'd found Troyanovsky in one of the flag-draped boxes of honor at the Cleveland auditorium. He, as an Ambassador, had been a very special guest.

I got up and walked over to the man against the wall in the Kuibyshev barbershop. He was still muttering to himself and scraping lather from his face.

"Pardon me," I asked, "but aren't you Mr. Troyanovsky?"

He looked up at me as if he were seeing the ghost of Ivan the Terrible.

"My name is Gilmore," I said, "of the Associated Press. Unless I'm awfully mistaken I interviewed you once at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland."

He nodded.

"Yes," he replied in good English, "I was there."

He was embarrassed, so I kept on speaking. Quickly.

"Well, how are you, Mr. Troyanovsky, and what are you doing down here in Kuibyshev?"

He hesitated and then explained that he was doing some writing. I assumed he meant a book, his memoirs, or something of the sort.

"I'm a journalist now," he said. "Not a grand one such as you, of course. I write for only a few people."

He rubbed at some more lather.

"I'm writing for the Kuibyshev newspaper," he continued, "the Volga *Tribune*."

This was a jolt. Not that there was anything wrong with writing for a country newspaper that came out three times a week It was the abrupt (for me) change in Mr. Troyanovsky's personal setting.

The last time I'd seen this quiet, dignified, little man he was occupying one of the boxes of honor at one of America's biggest public political gatherings. Many eyes had been turned his way that evening. He wore a dinner jacket and his wife had been dressed in an evening gown. And now, here was this same man getting tossed out of a chair in a third-rate barbershop in a fourth-rate hotel in Kuibyshev by a Red Army sergeant not half his age.

I shook Mr. Troyanovsky's hand, wished him good luck, motioned to Sam, the translator, and left the place.

"Who was that?" asked Sam.

"A journalist on the Volga *Tribune.*"

"Maybe he was the one who wrote that story about the American fliers that raided Tokyo," said the translator.

"Maybe he was," I replied.

13

Before the month of April was out the corps of foreign correspondents had been escorted back to Moscow once more. Handler and I remained in Kuibyshev as did all the diplomats. We didn't like being left behind like this, but there wasn't much we could do about it.

News in Kuibyshev was practically nonexistent. Occasionally, we got something from a foreign envoy, but little else.

One warm spring morning I was sitting on the grass down at the Volga. It made me think of the days when I, as a child, used to sit on the high green bank of the Alabama River, with my old Negro nurse at Selma. We would watch the long line of sweating, black-skinned men load the river boats, the old-fashioned stern-wheelers. This was the first place, I sup-

pose, at which I'd ever heard a Negro spiritual, and that music, or any music by the Negro race, has always been hauntingly beautiful to me. This mild day in Russia I looked down on a scene on the banks of the Volga and watched a group of men working with some small boats.

Of course, I said to myself, Volga boatmen!

That song that Feodor Chaliapin sang about the boatmen of this famous river came swinging through my mind. You know the one. The one that goes, as done in English, "Yoo ah hoo, ho!" And then that magnificent, broad, swelling chord that follows. "The Song of the Volga Boatmen."

I called to the translator, Sam, who was playing with a little white dog by the water. He looked up and I motioned for him to join me down by the boatmen.

"Sam," I said, "I'd like to talk to those fellows."

"Sure."

We walked up to the men. There must have been ten or twelve of them. I said "Good morning" to them in Russian. They answered me with "Good mornings" and looked me up and down.

The translator spoke to them. As I heard the word "Amerikanitz" I assumed he was telling them that I was an American correspondent who wanted to ask them a few questions.

"Ask them," I told Sam, "if they know 'The Song of the Volga Boatmen.'"

Sam translated. They shook their heads and one or two of them spoke.

"They say they don't know it."

"But they must," I insisted. "That song made the Volga famous in the U.S.A."

The translator turned that remark into Russian. The men shook their heads.

"Tell them Chaliapin used to sing it."

He told them.

"They say they never heard of Chaliapin," Sam replied. "You see," he explained, "these are simple, ignorant boatmen. I'm afraid they wouldn't know about such things."

I persisted.

"Tell them we in America and the Western world have always thought the boatmen of the Volga sang this song when they worked."

A tall old fellow with a gray beard and no front teeth spoke to the translator.

"He asked you to sing the song."

"I'll hum it," I said. And did.

They shook their heads and one of them said something to Sam.

"He says they never heard it, but asks why did you think the Volga boatmen sing it?"

I told him I understood that they sang it while they worked. When they used to pull the boats and barges up the river in the old days.

Sam translated again.

The men smiled. Two or three laughed. They spoke rapidly to Sam. The translator smiled and turned to me.

"Volga boatmen," he explained, "don't sing songs to make themselves work. Only vodka does that."

I shook hands all around and let them get back to their boats and their work. With nothing else to do I returned to the Grand Hotel and wrote a telegram about my conversation with the Volga boatmen and how they never heard of the famous song. With considerable misgivings I dispatched it to the cable desk of the Associated Press in New York.

A war was on. A very desperate war. Telegraph rates from

Russia were high. Was someone going to give me hell for wasting toll charges on such a story? I hoped not.

Now, I'd been abroad for more than a year. I'd covered the blitz in London and, with many others, had undergone certain dangers. Twice I almost got hit by a bomb. A blast blew a few pieces of glass in my face once. I'd sailed a British convoy through the Arctic to Archangel. I'd covered the burning of Coventry and Plymouth. And worked on the story of Rudolf Hess's sensational jump from a plane in Scotland. I'd been around a quarter of the world with Wendell Willkie. I'd had a forty-five-minute interview with De Valera in his austere office in Dublin. Winston Churchill had given me a steel helmet on the steps of No. 10 Downing Street.

In connection with all this I'd received a lot of nice messages from the Associated Press. But just messages. Nothing else. I was getting the same pay that I had been getting when I left New York more than a year before. I'd most definitely received no raise.

The morning after I sent that Volga boatmen story off to New York, a chambermaid knocked on my door at the Grand and handed me a telegram.

Still worrying about those cable tolls and what might be regarded as frivolity on my part, I opened the message.

GILMORE VOLGA BOATMEN STORY MAGNIFICENT STOP YOUR SALARY RAISED REGARDS CONGRATULATIONS KENPER.

I read it again. No, there was no mistake. They liked the story. My salary was upped and here was a telegram that ended up "Regards Congratulations" and it was signed by the great white father of the AP himself, Kent Cooper.

I thought about the fire at the London docks. The gutted

cathedral at Coventry. The long journey on the hard Russian train. And—the Volga boatmen. My friends. My very dear friends, the Volga boatmen. And I laughed. I laughed out loud.

But—I wasn't through with the Volga yet.

In about a week Handler and I left Kuibyshev on a Volga river boat, on a long trip down that twisting stream.

We were unescorted. Alone and to ourselves. It was marvelous to go without press department escorts. We took our own food, for the restaurant on the ship, like the restaurants everywhere, was closed.

The trip was a very slow one and we stopped at almost every village and certainly every town between Kuibyshev and Astrakhan. The ship would take on and let off passengers and, at least once a day we would take on great piles of brown cloth sacks loaded with precious grain. All the loading was done by women. An old man, with a white, imperial beard, was the ship's captain and there were two or three men in the engine room. The rest of the crew were women. And they alone loaded the heavy sacks of grain. On their backs and without the assistance of any machinery.

It was a pleasant trip. The days and nights were warm and we were free to walk about the towns and villages where the boat tied up. No one ever challenged us and no one ever asked us for credentials. If we were followed by the secret police we didn't know it. But this was late spring, 1942, and I suppose the secret police were too busy elsewhere to bother about two Americans, neither of whom spoke much Russian, walking through Volga river towns.

Meyer and I swam and lay in the sun and talked and talked and talked. He was a fine companion and a great conversationalist.

Down in what had been the German Volga Republic—an area about the size of Rhode Island, or perhaps Connecticut —we saw a strange and in a way, terrible sight.

All the people, thousands of them, had been moved eastward into Siberia, or southeastward into Kazakhistan by the Soviet Government. These Volga Germans had been living in this part of Russia since the time of Catherine the Great. They were, of course, Soviet citizens. They still spoke German though as this was part of the Communist code—not to extinguish the languages of the minorities. (They just extinguish the minorities, as has been the procedure in several instances.)

When the war came and the Germans invaded the U.S.S.R. the Soviets decided these Volga Germans were a poor security risk and they were uprooted and shipped east of the Urals far from the onrushing Nazi armies.

I don't know how these Volga Germans would have received the Wehrmacht. From conversations with at least two of them—in later years—I received the impression they would have welcomed them as liberators. No farmer that I ever talked to in the Soviet Union liked collectivized agriculture. The Volga German was no exception.

But those ghost towns. They gave me the shudders.

Villages of three and four hundred houses. Every one vacant. No smoke from the chimneys. No children or animals in the yards. No noise. Silence as deep as the bottom of a hole except for the high squeaking of a barn door as the incessant wind from the steppe blew it back and forth. And not a soul anywhere. It was one of my oddest sensations in all the time I was in Russia, and God pity those poor Volga people, wherever they are today.

One morning our ship reached Stalingrad. It was another

warm day and the sun beat down upon us. We swam and sunned in the morning, slept in the afternoon, and walked through the city streets at night. The people seemed to be going about their business much as people go about their business in any large Russian city. Red fires glowed in the famous tractor factory and lighted the skies for miles around. The chords of a distant accordion. A guitar in the blue-black evening. A sweet voice singing something about the steppe and the dry winds of Saratov. A quiet city that was to become a raging battleground known all over the world in just a few months.

Astrakhan was two days away. There I said good-by to Handler. He was traveling by another ship to the Persian side of the Caspian and then on to Teheran. His vacation.

I was preparing to hike to the center of the city from the river port when an excited woman from Intourist, the official Soviet travel agency, sighted me. She had a telegram for me. I opened it hurriedly. How had anyone found me in Astrakhan at practically the end of the world? The telegram was from Alan J. Gould, news editor of the AP, a splendid newspaperman and a fine friend.

The message read:

BRIAN BELL DIED HEART ATTACK AFTER BALL GAME REGARDS GOULD.

Brian Bell was chief of the Washington bureau of the Associated Press. How many baseball and football games we had watched together. It was very hard to believe that Brian Bell, this bright, happy man was gone and that I was never to see him again.

—HEART ATTACK AFTER BALL GAME.

I managed a faint smile, but tears were in my eyes. I smiled because if Brian had had anything to say about it, that would have been the way he wanted to go—AFTER a ball game.

How he loved sports.

I felt very much alone that moment down at Astrakhan on the landlocked Caspian Sea in Asia.

14

The Soviet Government decided sometime around the first part of July 1942 that the Germans were not going to capture Moscow. I can think of no other reasons which suddenly prompted them to inform Handler and me that we could go to the capital on a permanent basis and rejoin the other correspondents.

We were liberated from our exile on the Volga. We went. Naturally.

I shall always have some pleasant memories of Kuibyshev though. There were lazy days along the water of the big river and there were some spectacular nights at the Grand Hotel and at some of the *dachas* along the riverbank.

There were Aludin, Miss Hong, and the first Russian girl I got to know real well. Her name was Valya, which is short for Valentina. She was from Leningrad and looked down on Muscovites as people wholly inferior to people from Leningrad. You can imagine what she thought of the inhabitants of Kuibyshev.

Valya was an actress and had been evacuated from the city of her birth and dreams with an old mother. She was a great addition to Kuibyshev and she didn't find me too repulsive.

Valya and I went in for picnics and swimming parties.

I shall never forget the last one. She arranged it, even to buying the tickets for the boat. This was a small craft with a closed and open deck that went up and down the Volga in the Kuibyshev region, stopping about every five miles. They were as regular as streetcars. I got the food for the day out of the diplomatic store and took along a bottle of vodka and one of red wine. I don't know what we did with the wine. I know exactly what we did with the vodka.

We took the boat to the end of the line, a stop near the lower slopes of the Zhiguli Mountains. They were not mountains at all. Just hills. But rising out of the great plane of central Russia I suppose they did look like mountains.

Valya and I walked upstream until we found a place that had grass resembling a green on a golf course. There were no houses for miles. Just that big hump of earth they called the Zhiguli Mountains and the river.

It must have been about eleven o'clock in the morning when we got there and we were both warm. I was carrying the lunch and the vodka. Valya sat down by the water's edge, wrapped her arms around her pretty knees and looked out over the water.

"War," she said in Russian, "is a terrible thing. It brings so much sadness to so many people. But in every sadness there is something that is not so sad. I hope you understand."

I'm sure she was being more profound than my translation allowed. I told her I knew what she meant.

"Us," she smiled, "are not so sad. Do you think it is all right to be so happy when so many are sad?"

I gave her the old American answer to that one. She shook out her hair that hung over her shoulders, wrinkled her little nose and put it against my ear. Valya was an extremely

pretty girl and she never looked more beautiful than on that golden morning along the Volga. I unwrapped the vodka bottle and we took our first drink.

"Do you like Hemingway?" I asked.

"Geminvay?" she said. "Yes I like Geminvay."

This was all in Russian and I knew perfectly well it wasn't likely to be a literary conversation.

"Do you know his book about the bullfighting?"

Valya said she did know it.

"Do you remember the part where two friends lie beside a brook and drink and talk?"

Valya nodded.

"That is some of the greatest superficial conversation in the English language," I said.

She disagreed. Violently.

"Conversation," she said, "can never be both great and superficial between two men. It can be great and it can be superficial. But it can never be great and superficial between men. For that you must have a woman and a man."

"In any case," I said in English, "I always wanted to lie beside a stream and drink and make conversation."

"Is that all you want to do, Tovarich?" she laughed.

She got slowly to her feet and lifted her dress over her shoulders.

"I," she explained, "am going swimming."

The slip went next and Valya stood there for a moment in a bra and what are known, to my utter horror, as panties. However, there was nothing horrible about Valya's panties.

"Where did you get those?" I asked, pointing to them.

"They came from Tallin. From Estonia."

I was certain they didn't come from Russia.

The Soviet Union must have been the first country in mod-

ern times to have nationalized its underwear. Especially women's underwear. There is only one design—the cotton bloomer, long in the leg and with elastic at the top and the bottom and coming inevitably in only two colors, blue and purple.

I consider myself an expert on the subject of Russian underwear, for the Soviet clothesline reveals the deepest secrets of the linen closet and all you have to do to know all is to walk about the cities of this large land. And I can assure you I have spent much of my time walking about the cities and towns and villages of the Soviet Union.

Valya's panties were something to behold. Nothing less than pure silk, short, and trimmed in dainty lace. While I was admiring them she stepped out of them. Then she took off the bra. And there was Valya. Very much so. She joined me in another drink and then I joined her in nudity. It was all very pleasant. We swam for nearly an hour, had a satisfactory lunch, and lay on the grassy bank until the evening grew long and cool. We may have exhausted ourselves, but never our conversation. Despite my lack of Russian and her lack of English I still look upon her as one of the people in the world I like most to talk with. It could have been her beauty. Her beauty of face and body. And the depth of her love.

She told me most of her story that day. How she had a husband and how she was returning to him shortly. She knew I was leaving Kuibyshev too.

"So, Tovarich," she said as she lay against me, her head against my chest, her nose under my chin, "this is the end for us."

Coming as it did, this statement was like a short, violent stab. I couldn't even reply.

Two very quiet people walked back to the boat landing that night, returned to Kuibyshev and the Grand Hotel. I didn't leave for three more days and neither did Valya. She sewed up the holes in the few socks I had. Sewed the buttons on the shirts. Got all my things washed and went out to the airport with me to get the plane to Moscow.

That Kuibyshev airport. The last time I'd seen it was a rough day in March. The day Admiral William H. Standley arrived as the new American Ambassador. He came in in the midst of a snowstorm. A few diplomats had been on hand to greet him, one of them a thoroughly delightful Scot, then Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, later Lord Inverchapel, the British Ambassador.

I was standing beside Sir Archibald when the gray-haired, hearty and bluff former chief of naval operations, stepped off his plane at the Kuibyshev airport. The wind was whipping the snow about and tossing it against the new Ambassador's plane. The mercury was down around zero and the Ambassador, who'd retired from the Navy several years before President Roosevelt picked him for the Russian ambassadorial post, was cold.

Sir Archibald took a long draw on the pipe that was always with him.

"Our governments should be ashamed," he said as he shook his head, "to send old gentlemen as the admiral and me around the world to places such as this."

The Soviet Union was the second hardship post for the British Ambassador. He'd come to Kuibyshev from China.

How different seemed this airport in July. Standing there with my suitcases, portable typewriter, and Valya.

A uniformed man said our plane was ready.

"Valushka," I said.

"Yes, Tovarich?"

"Good-by, Valushka."

"Don't say good-by, Tovarich. Say so long."

"Then so long, Valushka."

I'm afraid we hung on to one another for a very long while. I got on the plane and I didn't look back. I remember Amy Lowell writing that saying good-by was like dying a little.

15

Back in Moscow I took up residence in my old room at the Metropole Hotel. There wasn't any other place to go. But after the Grand in Kuibyshev this was the Waldorf. There was a private bath and hot water. Well, it was hot several times a week, at least.

The British and American embassies still existed in Moscow, although in skeleton form. The ambassadors and most of the staff were confined to Kuibyshev, but a few officers and clerks were on duty at both of the Moscow buildings. The American Embassy, just across a large asphalted square from the Kremlin, had two occupants—Brigadier General Philip Faymonville and Major John Waldron, a young doctor, less than a year out of Georgetown Medical School. The general headed the U.S.A.'s Lend-Lease mission to the Soviet Union and Waldron was the mission's doctor, and a good one. I'd known the doctor briefly at Kuibyshev, but in Moscow it became a full-fledged friendship.

"I've got a wonderful girl," he told me one day shortly after I reached Moscow, "and I'd like for you to meet her."

"That's fine," I said with as much sarcasm as I could mus-

ter at the moment, "you and me and your girl. We'll all go out together and have a dandy time."

"Oh, no," said Waldron, "I've got a date for you too, and boy, wait until you see Tamara!"

He whistled. Hear it in America, France, or Russia, it's the same. The wolf's whistle.

I'd worked in Washington for eight years and I respected Georgetown men's opinion of women.

"Thanks, John, when and where?"

"Tonight at my apartment at the Embassy and then we'll go to the Aragvi for dinner."

I showed up about eight o'clock at the doctor's apartment, apartment No. 6 at the Embassy. The place was like a deserted barn. Half the windows had been blown out by the blast of a stick of bombs the Luftwaffe had dropped at the Kremlin. One of the bombs had hit between the Embassy and the tall, yellow brick barracks just inside the Kremlin's crenelated red brick walls. Glassless windows were stopped up with cardboard or just boarded over. There was no glass to be had in Moscow in those days. The elevator didn't work and the gas wasn't on, but the electricity was. However, it would have taken no electricity to see that Major Waldron had not only found himself a fine girl, but an extremely pretty one. I was introduced to Tanya and we got to know one another very well. Several years later they were married and they now live in the United States, the parents of three sons.

Tanya, the doctor, and I left the Embassy, walked around the corner of the National Hotel, under the balcony from which Trotsky once made a famous speech and strolled up Gorky Street Hill to the Centralny Telegraph (Central Telegraph) where we were to meet Tamara.

"What time is she supposed to meet us?" I asked, and I must have done it in Russian for Tanya replied, "*Voisem,*" which meant eight o'clock.

She wasn't there, of course.

Tamara was not on time for that first date, and now, after ten years of being married to her, I can say she's never been on time on any single occasion since then.

We stood around talking about this and that in the long, late, and beautifully blue twilight that Moscow enjoys in the summertime.

"Hell," I said, "I'm stood up. I've been stood up by Americans, Mexicans, Spanish, Italians, French, the British, and the Irish, and now by a Russian. Life gets tedious."

"*Nyet,*" said Tanya. "Tamara *budyet.*"

That meant, "No, Tamara is going to be here."

And in a few minutes she was.

She came walking towards us out of the cobalt-blue evening, an average-sized girl with the biggest, brownest eyes I'd ever seen. Her hair was brown too, and it hung long and thick over her trim shoulders. Her nose was turned up, her lips were full and her figure would make you throw rocks at the rest of the girls. Tamara's ankles were extremely thin, but there were muscles in the calves of her legs, the muscles that ballet dancing develops. She had very long eyelashes over those wondrous eyes, and if you'll pardon me for being a bit sloppy, she was about the cutest thing I'd ever seen. And that still goes.

We walked up Gorky Street Hill, the four of us. I was able to manage a sort of conversation with Tamara. This wasn't too difficult, because with her you certainly made an effort.

She laughed and smiled and rolled those big brown eyes and for the very first time I realized what I might, after all,

be in the workers' paradise. I was a worker, wasn't I? And this evening, with Major John Waldron and Tanya and Tamara, wasn't this paradise?

For some strange reason—and this still puzzles me—Tamara seemed to like me. I naturally encouraged this all I could.

We reached the Aragvi Restaurant, walked to the head of the line of people at its barred door, and knocked. A doorman, whose face I knew, and what's more important, a man who knew my face, appeared at the crack.

He let us in. How odd, I thought. No protest from the long line of men and women who must have been waiting to get inside the restaurant for a long time to enjoy, perhaps, the first good meal in many a day. But we were foreigners, as I've said before, and the Russians are historically polite to visiting foreigners. Or were until the cold war hit the freezing point.

I knew just about everyone who had anything to do with running the Aragvi, from the director to the chief chef, and when I left Moscow, eleven years from that night, I still knew them. It's the one and only restaurant in the world where I am in charge. I would like to say this is because of my magic personality and my way with Georgians (the Aragvi is a Georgian restaurant) but I'm afraid it's simply because I have been identified there with overtipping for so many years. I overtipped the first night I ever went to the Aragvi and I did the same thing for over eleven years. The often pronounced theory that overtipping causes contempt from a waiter is the biggest piece of nonsense I ever heard.

All over this world I have overtipped and I have yet to find any headwaiter, waiter, doorman, wine steward, barman, hat check girl, porter, taxi driver, sword dancer, barber, or Gypsy

fiddle player who showed me the slightest contempt for my overtipping. On the contrary, they've treated me better than most people. Waiting on the public is a very dull job and the people who do it don't get very rich. They deal with a great many dreary and ill-tempered individuals. Maybe it's an inferiority complex, as I've been told it is, to prefer being treated as if I owned two thirds of the joint, but when I go out of an evening, I like it.

There are two ways to dine at the Aragvi—in the main dining room, which looks like the men's room in Grand Central Station, New York, or in private rooms. I always chose a private room, and those private rooms at the Aragvi, especially the one that has a balcony overlooking the main dining room and facing the band, have been the scene of some merry goings on and been host to some very fancy folk. In my time in Russia I have entertained in that room, to mention but a few, John Foster Dulles, Major General Patrick J. Hurley, the late great editor Paul Patterson, of the Baltimore *Sun*, Eric Johnston, Major General Walter Bedell Smith, Admiral Alan G. Kirk, the late Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke, General Sir Ian Jacob, Mark Ethridge, the Louisville publisher, Eddie Rickenbacker, General Lucius Clay, every American Ambassador from Averell Harriman to Charles E. Bohlen and foreign envoys from Sir David Kelly, K.C.M.G., to the chargé d'affaires of Greece, Prince Thomas Ypsilanti. And, I believe they've all had a good meal and pleasantly remember the Aragvi.

We called the waiter Dostoevski. He wore a long, braided, claw-tailed coat which must have been made in the last century. His hair reached the back rim of his high starched collar. His face was long and thin and he was a brilliant man. He wore nose glasses attached to a thick black ribbon and

cuff links that once belonged to the Tsar. His shoes were very pointed and always polished. He could seat eighteen people faster than you can say samovar and he was a great judge of people and gray caviar and *satsivi*. He possessed a pair of eyes that looked like those of Alyoshi Karamazov. He once said that if Paris is the city of magnificent distance, then Moscow is the city of distance magnificencies. That is the only political remark I ever heard him make. And if he reports to the secret police—which he probably does—I am sure he gives them no ordinary run-of-the-mill stuff, but a highly imaginative account of what didn't go on under his long nose last night at the Aragvi. The more extraordinary the report the better, as far as the secret police are concerned, and I'm convinced that Dostoevski gives them the works. And lurid.

The night I met Tamara he was at his best. I believe he must have sensed my excitement at being with this beautiful and charming girl. He showed us to a room, brought in some summer wild flowers, summoned the Aragvi band, crowded them into our room, and ordered them to play the Georgian love song "Suliko."

We had caviar, *satsivi* (breast of turkey submerged in a cold sauce made with nuts), shashlyk, a plate piled high with it, green onions, thick slabs of fresh butter, the half-warmed, half-toasted bread peculiar to the Aragvi, and Turkish coffee.

We drank chilled vodka and *borzhom*, the Georgian soda water, sang and laughed, and later on, had the band play everything from "On the Streets of Yerevan," to the hauntingly sad *tsigansky* melody "Two Guitars."

It was an unbelievable evening in my life and, of course, I fell in love with Tamara.

16

Having Tamara fall in love with me wasn't so easy, for I didn't have a clear field and the competition was considerable. Also, I have never won any beauty contest. (My mother says I once came in second at the age of two to the present Probate Judge of Dallas County, Alabama, Colonel George Quarles.) I didn't know then what I know now, that while looks help a man tremendously, they aren't everything and some of the most beautiful and delightful women I've met in this world have extremely unhandsome husbands and love them with a fierce devotion.

Americans in Russia observed an unwritten rule—we never tried to capture another American's girl. But, between the Moscow representatives of other nations, the war was savage and the infighting was rough, with no holds barred. In fact, we invented a few.

If an Englishman had a girl and you took a fancy to her, you tried to get her. If an American had a girl and an Englishman liked her, he forgot all about the old school tie and the code of a gentleman, and made a play for her. The same was true for the French, the Canadians, the Scandinavians, the Greeks, the Persians, the Turks, and the Yugoslavs.

I had much opposition from the British camp and what made it hard on me was the fact that while I still spoke dog, or kitchen Russian, my rivals could rattle the stuff off as rapidly as they could sing the words to "The King."

Not blessed with good looks, I have always had to resort to words, spoken and printed, and when I'm muzzled by a language I can't even talk about the weather in, I find it very

difficult indeed to deal in the fine nuances of romantic chit-chat and banter.

Tamara and I began about like this:

"Maken te the okno auf, pozhalasta."

"Da. Ya budu eef I can."

In German, Russian, and English, scrambled in a horrible polyglot, the above is:

"Open the window, please."

"Yes, I will if I can."

Hardly the language of love, but as Tamara once said, you've got to get the window open sometime.

My romance slid backwards a step when Henry Cassidy, the AP's No. 1 man in Russia handed me, the AP's No. 2 man in Russia, a message from New York suggesting I take a vacation in Iran, for the coming winter would probably be long and hard.

I said a sad good-by to Tamara (I'm afraid the sadness was mostly on my part) and took off by plane for Teheran. I thought about this girl a great deal between Moscow, Kuibyshev, and a spot on the map on the northern shore of the Caspian Sea called Guryev. I knew I'd never met anyone quite like her. I really had it. I was in love.

I am not a very romantic-looking fellow, but I certainly managed to get myself mixed up in a pack of romance in Russia.

After Moscow, Teheran, the capital of Persia, in October 1942, was like the Riviera.

The first hour I was there I met an old friend, Tim Timmerman, who was organizing all the municipal police departments for Iran, including that of Teheran.

"Come on out to the Darband," he said. "It's a hotel the old Shah built for his friends and everything except the price

is on that scale. It overlooks the present Shah's palace and you'll like it a lot."

"But how, Tim," I asked, "am I going to get back and forth? They say the Darband is eighteen miles from town."

"I'm the chief of police," he replied. "I've got a car AND a policeman chauffeur day and night. When I'm not using the car and chauffeur they're yours."

A chief of police could hardly be fairer. I accepted and established myself in a double bedroom with a spacious balcony overlooking not only the palace, but the Shah's royal tennis courts. This hotel still remains the best one, for a number of reasons, that I've ever been in. There was only one big objection. The mullah.

The first morning I was awakened not by the southern sun, but by the singsong of a not too distant mullah greeting the dawn on a nearby hillside. I never understood what he was doing, but he must have been an extremely religious man, for he loosed those guttural wails towards the Persian heaven at least ten times a day. At night he was silent, building up his strength for the next day's yodel.

A man at his prayers is something you don't get flippant about. At least I don't. Neither do you lodge complaints about it. You just accept it or move. I accepted it, and in time got to like the mullah.

The hotel had an exceptionally gifted band. It was made up of six Rumanian Jews who fled before the Nazis occupied their country. Fortunately, they fled with their fiddles, for they could certainly make music with them. Night after night I'd sit there, always in good company, for in no time at all I'd been adopted by the White Russian colony of Teheran, nearly all of whom spoke good English.

We would sit there and listen to the brightest and saddest

of music miles and miles away from the war, and talk about Mother Russia and the Tsar. I'm afraid not many of my friends ever knew the Tsar, or came very close to his court, but they had perfect manners, told a story with much grace, ate, drank, danced, and talked far into the morning. The talk was never serious. But it was awfully pleasant.

It was during my stay in Teheran that I met William W. Chaplin. He was then a foreign correspondent for the International News Service. I saw him first regaling a large gathering of men seated at a large round table at the Ferdowsi Hotel, in the center of the city.

Bill was describing the Italian troops in their recent Ethiopian campaign, which he had covered.

"All day long," he was explaining in that raspy bass voice, "they would march and fight under the hot Abyssinian sun, and then, when they came home to their tents, they would be lugging big, heavy blocks of stone."

I looked around the table and recognized a few of Chaplin's audience. One of them was a very earnest and serious young man, the correspondent of a famous organization. He had a troubled look on his face as he followed Bill's account of the Italian soldiers in Ethiopia.

"And there at night by candlelight," Chaplin continued, "those Eye-Ties would hammer and chip away at their stones. And in the morning they'd have a finished product. And their stone would read, 'Viva Duce.' Just imagine!"

The young man with the troubled look from the famous organization was one of those fellows with the weight of the world on his shoulders and he was always searching for the truth in life, whatever that is. His troubled look changed to one of righteous indignation.

"Wait a minute, Chaplin," he broke in, "you seem to have

been affected by Fascist propaganda. Just what are you trying to prove by that story?"

I suppose he thought Bill was trying to prove the efficacy of Fascism.

"Trying to prove?" said Bill, more than a little surprised. "I'm not trying to prove anything. I'm just illustrating how the Italians are great stonecutters. Greatest stonecutters in the world!"

An English brigadier smiled. An American major laughed out loud. The young man with the weight of the world on his shoulders looked devastated. He was, too.

Chaplin and I visited all the night clubs in Teheran that night. We had no stones to cut. We liked one particularly named Pars. It featured Polish acrobats.

When we were leaving Pars, Bill, who is about six feet three, and is, or was at that time, very, very thin, got down on the floor and rolled himself into a Persian carpet. He then proceeded to roll down a long flight of stairs, much to the concern of the Persian proprietor and a group of incoming guests who, halfway up the stairs, turned and fled back down them as Chaplin, in his carpet, whirled down upon them like a sheathed dervish. All of them made the door safely except a French woman. Bill got her from behind.

"Penalize me," he said to the startled woman, who was trying to pick herself up from the tangled carpet and Chaplin's long form. "Penalize me. I know the rules. Half the distance to the goal line for clipping!"

Safely, we went out into the night and called the chief of police's automobile. We decided it was time to retire and asked the driver, as best we could, to take us to the hotel.

"*Bali, bali,*" he said.

"Mine hurts too," said Chaplin.

When we reached my room Bill became intrigued with the full-length bath tub.

"Longest tub I ever saw in my life."

He took off his clothes, drew some water, stepped in, and after a few minutes, fell fast asleep. I felt beyond trying to move this long, wet, naked body so, to prevent him from drowning, I pulled the plug and went to bed. I was awakened from the deepest of sleep by a sharp, rattling noise from the bathroom. I got up and looked inside. Did you ever see a man, six foot three inches long, shivering in a bath tub in an Iranian dawn? Neither had I.

While I was waking Bill from his white hell in the bathroom the mullah went into action on the hill.

Chaplin opened one eye. Slowly he raised his head to the edge of the tub.

"If you are praying for me," he said, "do so quietly."

17

Getting back to Moscow, I discovered, was not so easy.

Chaplin had been ordered to the Soviet Union, and together we'd go daily to the Intourist office in Teheran and inquire about the planes from a Mr. Travkin, an English-speaking Russian.

"No place for you tomorrow, boys," he'd say with a cheerful smile. "Next plane next Tuesday. Maybe you'll get a place then."

We'd curse and go about our business of resting up for the long hard winter. Next Tuesday it would be the same thing.

Mr. Travkin would happily inform us that there was no place for us.

"Next plane Friday. Maybe then," he would smile.

Bill and I went shopping. I had a long list, for when one correspondent traveled to the outside world, he always shopped for his friends, and even acquaintances. I made many purchases. Shoes and socks and stockings. Shirts and shoes and dresses. Shoelaces, suits, razor blades, toothbrushes, and tooth paste. Portable phonographs, records, and needles.

One of my phonograph purchases was for Cassidy. I remember paying about fifty dollars for a crank-winding portable. I cite this case because eight years later I bought a phonograph from a member of the American Embassy. I purchased it along with a number of other things and didn't bother to examine it very closely. That night the chauffeur who went after the purchases picked up the phonograph and said, "Mr. Gilmore, this is the phonograph that used to belong to Mr. Cassidy."

I looked at it for the first time. He was right. It even had Cassidy's initials on it. What concerned me so much was the fact that, after buying the machine for Henry in Teheran and bringing it to him, I'd bought it from him when he left Russia several years later. Then I'd sold it to someone and here was the same instrument coming back to me after all those years and at DOUBLE the price I originally bought it for in Persia.

The GIs invented some expressive phrases and words during the last war. One of the best was "sweating it out." That's certainly descriptive of waiting for a place on an airplane. They also called the Eiffel Tower the "Eyeful Tower," and Chiang Kai-shek "Shanker Jack." And the Russian word *horosho* for all right, or good, was for them "Artie Shaw."

As a strictly Dixieland man I'd never quite agree with that last one.

Chaplin and I sweated out that plane and a party every night helped us to do it. But one party overreached itself.

A mysterious-looking Englishman in tweeds arrived at the hotel one afternoon. Timmerman, my friend who was reorganizing the police departments, and hopelessly confused they were, too, whispered to me that the Englishman was one of Britain's top secret agents in the Middle East. If I remember correctly his name was Bishop.

There seemed to be no secrets in the last war. I remember Colonel James Crockett, a veteran of the first world war as well as the second once saying to me, "Ed, I'm going to write a book someday and it's going to be on the theme of how badly secrets are kept. In the last war and in this one the Germans have known most of our plans and we spent a great deal of time and energy going around hiding papers from one another. Sir, I'm going to write a book about that."

I wonder if Jim ever got around to it.

I met Bishop, the new arrival at the hotel bar. Another guest who'd just come in from somewhere was an engaging Irish-American named Sheen. He had something to do with airplanes. Bishop and Sheen and four or five other foreigners gave the bar a good play during the evening, had dinner, and then returned to the bar for some more play. I wasn't in the last gathering, being with the Russians and the Persians, but I was around its edges enough to see that the party was making progress. About midnight it moved upstairs to the same floor on which I was living. Next door to my room was the apartment of a red-haired 230-pound American named Sheridan who'd come over from an import-export business in Cairo to advise the Iranian Government on its food policy.

About one-thirty in the morning my section of the party moved upstairs and I believe we were in Sheridan's living room when we heard a loud shout in the corridor. Outside we found Sheen and one or two others. Their expressions were serious.

Bishop, the Englishman, they explained, had fallen over the inside stair railing on the fifth-floor landing. They pointed to his crumpled body on the stone basement floor below us. He lay quite still, a pool of blood near his head.

"I'm afraid he's dead," said Timmerman, who'd been downstairs to look.

He asked the manager, who spoke Persian, to telephone the nearby police station. He shooed the rest of us to our rooms. Several people began talking at once. Timmerman began an on-the-spot inquiry. Later in the morning he told me what he'd learned—that Bishop had been drinking with several others in a big room at the head of the stairs. He got up from a chair at one point and strolled out of the room. He hadn't staggered and didn't appear to be drunk. At the railing the only witness to Bishop's fall said he tottered, lost his balance, and plunged over the railing. The fall must have broken his neck as well as crushed his head. It was a long way to the stone floor of the basement.

Timmerman shook his head.

"This man's being a secret agent complicates things," he commented as he sat there thinking. "The poor fellow. He was a long way from home. I bet he has a wife and children, and probably a mother and father still alive."

Timmerman sighed and looked at me.

"This is a hell of a place to die in," he said.

One year later Timmerman himself was to die in Teheran. Not so violently and mysteriously as Bishop. It was from a

heart complication, but he never got back to the United States to see the wife to whom he wrote so patiently and lovingly every night of the week.

All the soldiers in the last war didn't wear uniforms. Far from it. And many of them gave their lives in strange lands, under strange circumstances, attended by no words of public praise.

18

During the frustration of trying to get back to Russia from Iran two old friends from Washington flew into Teheran in an American airplane. They were Patrick J. Hurley and John Henry. Hurley was a brigadier general at this time, and Henry, former White House reporter for the Washington *Evening Star*, his aide. At least Henry was with the general and if John is around he always aids you. He's that sort of man. It was a pleasant surprise meeting them again and even more pleasant when John whispered to me that he could probably get me on the plane.

"This is all hush-hush," he said. "Nobody knows about our mission to Russia except the Germans, the Japs, the British, the Free French, the Turks, the Greeks, the Persians, and the Russians."

He said he'd lay the groundwork for me and then I'd have to sell the idea to the general. I did that pretty quickly, for within a few hours I found myself seated next to the onetime Secretary of War at a luncheon.

"Can you speak Russian?" asked Hurley.

"Of course," I replied.

"I mean speak it well?"

"Sure," I lied.

"Can you play poker?" he asked.

"No, sir."

General Hurley frowned. I knew I'd said the wrong thing.

"Can you sing?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Will you promise not to unless called upon?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you believe in everlasting love?" continued this man whom I've always found to be one of the very few people in the world who is consistently amusing and gay.

"Yes, sir."

"Then you shall go with us on the flying machine," he said.

I put in a plug for Chaplin. The general said it was all right with him, but I'd have to sell the plane's captain, whose name was Tom Collins. Tom Collins. What an extremely interesting name for Pat Hurley's captain.

Tom said it would ordinarily be all right, but he was already heavy-laden, that he didn't know Russia, and that the Embassy at Kuibyshev was asking him to bring along several tons of mail from Teheran. He would take me, he added, but Bill had better go along by regular transport. As it turned out, Chaplin left before we did and got to Moscow several days before I flew in with Brigadier General Hurley and his plane.

Many days hadn't passed before Hurley called me to prove I could speak Russian. He said we'd be leaving shortly and that Captain Collins wanted to talk to the Russians about weather and what to expect on the other side of that tall range of mountains which separates northern Iran from the U.S.S.R.

I was ordered to go along to a Russian office at the airport and translate. How I managed—with my limited Russian—I shall never know. I discussed temperatures, topography, airports, and so on, and must have gotten it fairly correct for we hit no mountain peak and got where we were headed for on scheduled time.

Our first stop, after we'd flown the mountains of north Persia, was that desertlike tip of Soviet soil on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea. We were in Uzbekistan, but fortunately the delegation that was on hand to greet us spoke Russian.

Tom Collins put the plane down on the desert air strip. A man in a colonel's uniform stood smartly at attention as we unloaded ourselves. We approached and the colonel began a long recitation at the top of his lungs, as if we were standing on the western slopes of the Caspian and he was trying to make himself heard over that space of water.

He spoke so loudly and so fast that I had little difficulty in comprehending what he was saying. In the name of the Government of the Soviet Union he welcomed General Gurley (for that was the way he pronounced it) to the U.S.S.R. and he hoped his mission would be successful and his stay a pleasant one, and if he wanted gasoline for his airplane he (the colonel) was the boy who'd see that he got it.

I translated all of this to Hurley, who stood at attention, very erect and very handsome in a well-tailored uniform topped off by a black ribbon to which Pat attached his nose glasses.

The general, in turn, unloosed a long flow of flowery and picturesque language. I'm afraid most of his eloquence was lost in my basic Russian translation, but the colonel looked pleased, came forward and shook hands all around, and in-

vited us to have something to eat and drink. We did both, but were shortly back in the plane for we had a long way to go. We headed directly north, across the length of the Caspian, then straight up the valley of the Ural River towards Kuibyshev. As we circled over that sprawling, overcrowded Volga city, Pat looked down and shook his handsome head.

"What's your impression?" I asked.

"From here," said President Roosevelt's special envoy, "it looks like a cold dead thing in a half-dead world."

Snow was already on the ground and Pat was probably right. After a night's layover we were on our way to Moscow. I was still translating. Now between a Russian navigator and Captain Tom Collins.

Embassy people met us at the airport. The general and his party were taken to Spasso House, the home of every American Ambassador, and I went back to Mother Metropole.

After some frantic searching I found Tamara. She seemed delighted to see me and not at all displeased when I told her I'd brought her a present from Persia.

"A rug, I suppose," she laughed.

I told her that it was not a Persian rug, but shoes. Her brown eyes brightened as I unwrapped two pairs, the best Teheran had to offer, which wasn't much, but with none to be had in Moscow, this was something special.

She was delighted with a blue suède pair with very high heels, but showed no enthusiasm whatsoever over a low-heeled sports model.

"What's the matter with these?" I asked.

"Oh"—she brightened—"I am very pleased and I thank you very much, but they are not for me."

I asked her for whom she thought I'd bought them if not for her.

"For some footballist," she told me.

Since that day I've never purchased her a pair of low-heeled shoes again.

19

General Hurley had come to Russia, I was given to understand, to look over the Soviet-German front and to gently but firmly let Stalin gain the impression that the United States had a serious war on its hands in the Pacific.

Pat Hurley was a good man for such a job, and after a ninety-minute talk with the tough Soviet leader in the Kremlin—a talk that was featured by much plain and frank language on both sides—Stalin shook his graying head, smiled, and remarked, "General, you are a hard man."

I know of no other time in history that Joseph Stalin ever called another man tough. Hurley not only talked to the old Georgian but he talked back to him and in no uncertain language. I got all this, not from the general, but from a translator who came away somewhat shocked at the audacity of the visitor from Washington.

From what I could gather this man from Oklahoma made a favorable impression on the marshal. Stalin later had him escorted to the front, saw to it that he met a lot of Soviet generals, and even let him review Red Army troops then closing the ring around the German troops at Stalingrad.

The American military attaché in Moscow, the British military attaché, and a number of other military men from the Allied side had been stopped cold in every effort to visit

the Russian-German front. Hardly a way to treat your comrades in arms, but that's what the Soviets were doing in those days. And they were getting away with it.

The Embassy told Pat Hurley about this situation. How the War Department had been pressing the military attaché to get the answers to a number of routine questions which would have been easy if the Soviets had been just the slightest bit co-operative. It made an impression on Hurley, and when he went to the front he took along a sharp-eyed assistant military attaché who spoke Russian. The visiting brigadier general went out of his way to do this and I hope he got credit for it somewhere along the line. I know Ambassador Standley and the military and naval attachés were very pleased at his gesture.

"I've never seen anything quite like it," the assistant told me later. "The Germans were just a short distance away, but General Hurley insisted on going out in broad daylight and inspecting and saluting a company of Russian soldiers. When they shouted their greeting to him he did a peculiar thing. He asked the Soviet commander if he might salute these Russian soldiers in his own way."

"And what was that?" I asked.

"Oh," he explained, "he stood at attention and gave an Indian war whoop in a voice you could hear for ten miles across that frozen front. I'm sure the Nazis are convinced he's the Russian's secret weapon."

"How did the Russians take Pat's war whoop?"

"He scared the hell out of them."

After his trip to the front, where he and the assistant military attaché gathered a lot of information about the Red Army, Pat Hurley asked to see Stalin once more. While he was waiting for the Kremlin appointment he had some free

time. Dressed in a pair of army trousers, bedroom slippers, and a shirt with no insignia of rank, he sauntered into the billiard room of Spasso House one morning and found a tall, gaunt chief petty officer from the U.S. Navy knocking the pool balls about.

"Good morning," said the general.

"Good morning to you," said the chief, paying President Roosevelt's special emissary but scant attention for he didn't have the faintest idea who he was.

"Mind if I take a cue?" asked Hurley.

"Naw," said the chief. "Do what you want to. This ain't my joint."

The navy man was stopping over in Moscow after a trip down from Murmansk—where the Americans had a small mission. He began racking up the balls. The game got under way without introductions. They played in silence. Finally the navy man spoke.

"I hear old Pat Hurley's in Moscow," he said.

"Yes?" asked Hurley, raising an eyebrow. "Do you know him?"

"I used to know him around Washington," replied the chief, taking sight on the six ball.

"What did you think of him?" asked the general.

"Aw, he's a windy old bastard," said the chief, "but I suppose he's all right."

"I'm glad you think he may be all right," replied Pat.

"Why, you some buddy of his?"

"Hell, no," answered Hurley, "I'm him."

A witness to this scene told me the chief petty officer didn't even bother to put down his pool cue. With it clutched firmly in his hand, he fled from the room. I always figured he

took the cue with him for possible self-defense if the man from Oklahoma set out after him.

We had some great parties with the general in Moscow and one of them was at the Aragvi Restaurant, where the special emissary insisted on teaching the Georgian orchestra "The Red River Valley."

I was amazed and amused at the way this man operated. He certainly had a way with the Russians. He seemed to like them and they seemed to like him.

He came to Moscow on another occasion during the war. He was a major general on this second trip. He was as gay and entertaining as ever and, I believe, he continued to make a strong impression on Joseph Stalin. For a long time I thought he might be appointed Ambassador to the Soviet Union. He was made an ambassador, all right, but he was sent to China.

Pat Hurley's mission to Moscow was the first of many that came over from Washington and other parts of the world. The next big one, I believe, was Wendell Willkie's.

I hadn't seen Willkie since we toured England and Ireland together early in 1941. That's putting my part of the trip in a wrong light. Willkie toured England and Ireland. With several other correspondents I went along to cover the trip. But, we got to know one another and I liked him immensely. I think of him today as one of the greatest Americans I ever knew.

Wendell Willkie was a fine, courageous, intelligent man. He played an important role in the affairs of my life, which leads me to a chapter of my story that I have never put on paper before.

20

In the spring of 1943 I knew I had never met anyone and would never meet anyone quite like Tamara Kolb-Chernashovaya. I was in love with her. Hopelessly in love. So a cold, clammy terror swept over me one morning in mid-March when her sister Zinaida knocked on my door and asked me if I knew where Tamara might be.

To ask the whereabouts of anyone in Russia implies a great deal, for it suggests that someone has disappeared and to disappear in the Soviet Union usually means the secret police have been at work.

Tamara and I often spoke of the secret police (as what Russian doesn't?) and we knew that before the war Soviet citizens did not frequently make friends with foreigners. But a war was on now and Russia was receiving aid, and much aid, from the United States and we were allies. It was inconceivable that the Soviet authorities would object to their citizens associating with the few Americans stationed in Moscow.

I told Zina (nickname for Zinaida) that I thought Tamara was at her home. The sister said she had been at home but that she had gone to the market for her mother and hadn't returned.

Zina made a sign with her two hands, crossing the first two fingers of her right hand over the first two fingers of her left hand.

This is the sign that the Russian people make when they mean someone is in jail. I was stunned. I asked her as best I

could why Tamara could be in jail. Zina was crying now and she shook her head, refusing to reply.

If she were in trouble with the secret police it meant that I was the cause of the trouble. Zina just didn't want to admit this to me.

I don't believe I ever felt more helpless. I telephoned a translator and asked her to come over as quickly as she could. Through the translator I got Zina's story. That some of the girls who'd been going with foreigners had been warned off by the N.K.V.D., as the secret police were then called. Tamara had never been warned, but she knew what had happened to other girls. Zina was sure she had been arrested.

I said she had better inquire at N.K.V.D. headquarters. She looked at me as if she couldn't believe the words that were being translated to her.

"That's not done here," the translator told me. How much, how very much, I still had to learn about Communist Russia.

"Well, we've got to do something," I suggested. "I'll go to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and inquire."

The translator shook her head.

"If you will let me give you some advice," she interrupted, "don't do that. If they have her it will only hurt her. Just wait a while and see what happens."

That was all we could do and we didn't have to wait long. This same night Tamara returned to her mother's apartment and then she came to see me. She clutched a piece of paper in one hand and she looked very frightened. She told me her story—against stern warnings of the N.K.V.D.

She'd been picked up by the secret police at the market and they'd been talking to her all day. Telling her how she was wasting her time with a foreigner. How I didn't love her and how it was unpatriotic to be in love with any foreigner.

Particularly an American, representative of the foulest capitalistic system in the world.

Tamara unclasped her hand and showed me the piece of paper. It was an official document. Signed and sealed and as I had it translated it gave her "permission" (I shall always remember that part of it) gave her "permission" to establish residence in a certain section of what I found on the map to be western Siberia. She had just forty-eight hours to leave Moscow. It was almost unbelievable, but here was the document and here was Tamara.

What could I do? She said there was nothing I could do. But I was determined to try something, and before many hours had passed, Tamara and I agreed that if she really did have to leave Moscow, western Siberia, or any other part of Siberia, was out of the question. I said we agreed on this. That is not strictly correct. Tamara said millions of Russians had been sent to Siberia before and that she supposed millions of them would be sent there in the future. That it didn't particularly matter. She was despondent. Utterly dejected.

I talked with her mother and learned she had a number of relatives in a village near Ryazan, about a hundred and fifteen miles southeast of Moscow. We decided if she had to leave the city—and everyone seemed to think there was no way to prevent this—it would be better if she could live near relatives than to go to some corner of Siberia where she would know no one and where life would be difficult.

The thought of a young girl, trained since she was six years old to be a ballet dancer, at hard labor in Siberia was an enormity.

Her mother wrote a letter to the authorities explaining all this and about the relatives near Ryazan and it worked. She was given another paper, again giving her "permission" to

establish residence in the village where her relatives lived. At least this was something. And it wasn't Siberia.

The heartless things that the Soviet Government does to its citizens often have an odd angle. I have seen this happen again and again. A man, or a woman, is arrested for some political offense (usually based on nothing more than suspicion) and is given a sentence of say ten years. Then, after special pleading, the sentence is changed to eight years. Everyone concerned becomes thankful to the Soviet officials for lightening the sentence. Thankful instead of burning with resentment at the unfairness of the original charge and sentence.

Tamara and her mother and sister thought a great favor had been done her. They gave some official credit for having a heart. I was deeply saddened, angry over the whole senseless business, and terribly put out that this much injured family was now actually speaking with appreciation for what the government had done instead of sizzling with just wrath. But again, here is the Russian mind at work. It does not operate the same way as ours.

There is an old, old Russian song in which the singer admits that he may be arrested and sent to Siberia.

"But ours," he explains against the minor chords of a guitar, "is a wide and spacious land and Siberia is still a part of it. I may be going to Siberia, but I'll still be in Russia."

I heard a beautiful girl named Tanya sing that song one night and the next night she was on her way to Siberia.

I number the few hours that Tamara and I spent together after we realized that she did have to leave Moscow as among the most terrible of my life though my life has been a happy one. They were real agony, and what made everything worse was the realization that I was the cause of all this trouble.

I told Tamara that I wanted to marry her. She stared at me, bewildered.

"You would do that?"

"Nothing would make me more happy," I assured her.

"But it's impossible. We shall never see one another again. I am going away and they will never let me come back to you," she said.

This was getting very emotional.

I asked her to believe me. That she would not only return to Moscow, but I would fix things so I could marry her.

"But how?" she asked.

"I don't know," I said, "but somehow."

"Hoaney," she replied (she has always called me that except when angry, and then it's Eddy, or Meesta Gilmore). "Poor hoaney, you look so sad."

I determined then and there to do something about this situation, even if it meant getting into the Kremlin to do it.

Those brief few hours we had left together were sad affairs indeed. We would walk to the Crimean bridge and look at the frozen Moskva River. We'd ride to the beautiful Lenin Hills overlooking the old city. My heart was as heavy as it could be and I was completely frustrated with the feeling of not being able to do anything at all about this. Everything I suggested to Tamara and her relatives and to friends of mine who'd been in Russia a long time, they rejected. They said it would only make her case worse.

Finally, it was time for her to go. I shall skip over the trouble we encountered trying to buy Tamara a railway ticket in order to comply with the official order that she be out of the city by such and such an hour on such and such a date. I shall only say that neither she nor her sister nor her mother were able to purchase a ticket on any train. Busses

were not running and there was no such thing in Moscow in those days as a taxi. The priority for railway tickets was great, and although we offered twice and three times the amount of one ticket, we couldn't get one.

The chief of the police precinct in which Tamara lived was given the job of seeing to it that she left the city as ordered. She asked him for advice. What she should do when there was no railway ticket to be had? We all feared that if she didn't get out of Moscow by the specified time the authorities would change their mind and make it Siberia again.

"I have no interest in how you leave Moscow," said the police chief.

"But, please," asked Tamara, "what do I do? How do I leave when I can buy no ticket? Please, help me?"

He looked at her coldly.

"You can walk, can't you?" he said.

"For 115 miles?"

"That is no business of mine," he answered. "Good-by. Please go. I am busy."

I had an old automobile that had already traveled more than 125,000 miles. It was in terrible condition, but those were the hard war years and there was little I could do about putting it into condition. No spare parts, no tires to be had, and certainly no way to get a new car. We just did the best we could, which wasn't much.

We had a chauffeur named Pavel and he said the automobile might make the trip to Ryazan and back if we could get the extra gasoline needed for the trip. Gasoline was strictly rationed and there was no place to buy it but Moscow. There were no filling stations along the road. Most of the foreigners I knew were still in Kuibyshev, but I went to a number of people and, as much as they needed gasoline,

they all contributed a few liters. After several hours of begging I had enough to make the trip. Pavel and I figured it all out and then filled jugs and jars with gasoline all through the night.

Saying good-by to Tamara was about as difficult a thing as I'd ever done.

"Good-by, my darling," I finally managed to gasp as she stood in the doorway, a forlorn-looking little thing in a thin cloth coat, the high-heeled shoes from Teheran, a pair of my gloves, and a little blue beret.

"Never good-by, hoaney," she smiled through tears. "We will meet again. You keep warm, hoaney."

She turned quickly and jumped into the old automobile. Her sister was making the trip with her. Zina said she knew if she got out into the country she would be able to buy some badly needed potatoes for the family. Pavel started the motor, and what seemed to be my life rolled off down the cold cobblestone street.

Pavel returned the next night. He wasn't very talkative. He said he'd delivered Tamara at her aunt's and that she was well, but sad. He wouldn't say anything more.

Three days later, near midnight, my telephone rang and it was Tamara. Hearing her voice was like living again. We didn't say much. But we said it a long time. She said life wasn't bad down there. That her relatives were very kind to her and that the money I had given her was plenty.

I learned later that she walked sixteen miles—eight miles each way—to make that telephone call.

Three weeks went by. I decided to go to see her and to take her some food and some clothes that I had been able to scrounge. Warm clothes for working in the open, for that's what she was doing. This time I got the necessary gasoline

by trading soap and cigarettes and two cans of Spam that I'd bought in Teheran.

It wasn't easy for a foreigner, or for a Russian, to leave Moscow, for military road blocks were placed around the city. The Germans still held a line less than one hundred miles away. Spring had come and I decided to bluff my way —as a fisherman. I borrowed rods and piles of tackle and set off with Pavel at the wheel. We got through every road block using my documents, American passport, smiles and persuasion, and the fishing gear. We told the fellows with rifles we planned to fish about fifty miles from the city.

The road was terrible and the hours dragged until we got there. Tamara was in a village all right and the place in which she was living was actually the village miller's. She had a small room, shared by a girl cousin in the home of her aunt. It was the same village in which Tamara's mother had been born. The mill where Tamara was living and all the land around it for many miles had been part of the estate owned by a grandfather she had never seen.

It goes without saying that it was wonderful being with her again. Holding her. Just running my fingers across her cheek. Then came the time that I'd been dreading—saying another good-by.

She stood there clutching my coat, tears running down her now sunburned face, and saying over and over again, "Hoaney, I luv you."

I looked back as our automobile bumped down the ruts of a country road. Tamara was running after the car. Running through the mud and falling and getting up and running and falling again. I asked Pavel to stop the car and I ran back to her.

"Tomka," I pleaded with her, "please believe in me. I

don't seem to be able to fix things here. But somehow I'm going to do it. I think I am going back to America and try to get things straightened out from there. Just believe me. I'll come back."

Her eyes were as sad as I ever saw them.

"Hoaney," she told me, "I beleef you. Mebbe you cum back someday. I know you, hoaney. I know you gonna try."

21

Not many days after I returned to Moscow from the village near Ryazan, Joseph E. Davies, a former United States Ambassador to the Soviet Union flew into the Russian capital from Washington. His mission was supposed to be a great secret, but very little remained a secret in Moscow very long. We learned he came bearing at least two things—a letter from President Roosevelt to Joseph Stalin and a fresh print of the film *Mission to Moscow,* which was a Hollywood version of Davies' diplomatic assignment in the U.S.S.R.

He showed the picture to Stalin and Company in the Kremlin one night. There was mixed opinion—as I got it from translators and others present—as to whether the Soviet leader was impressed or embarrassed by seeing himself portrayed by an American actor.

From a propaganda point of view he certainly could not have objected to the film in general. It was very pro-Soviet, but let me say right here that back in those days when the Red Army was standing off the Germans on a very long front, a great many people in high places and low were saying and writing complimentary things about the Russians.

In that group at the Kremlin the night of the film showing

no one seemed to have asked Stalin what he thought of the picture and I suppose we shall never know. However, it was my strong opinion that Stalin must have enjoyed it. I always felt that any man who allowed cities, streets, avenues, roads, factories, precincts, wards, counties, rivers, mountains, football teams, stadiums, public parks—and so on, ad nauseam—to be named after him must be in love with himself and the sound of his name. He probably thought that *Mission to Moscow* was great art.

I have referred to Joseph Stalin several times as the Soviet leader. In the true sense of the word, Stalin never led the Russian people. He threatened them, he punished them, and he executed them and kept them in submission, but he never led them.

Mr. Davies delivered his letter, showed his picture, was wined and dined by the Kremlin, and then prepared to fly back to the United States via Siberia.

By this time I had received permission from the Associated Press to take an American vacation, the first in over three years, and inasmuch as the former Ambassador's convoy through Siberia was going to consist of two planes, he was obviously a man to beg a ride from. I asked him about going along and he readily agreed, but suggested I should travel in Major General Burns' plane as he had more room. General Burns, a Lend-Lease officer of high caliber, also agreed. I awaited word for the take-off after I got my exit visa from the authorities.

We flew eastward, of course, and it was some experience.

Our first stop was Novosibirsk in the center of Siberia. Mr. Davies was not feeling well, but he did get off the plane and ride the short distance across the Ob River into the city from the airport.

For this trip of about fifteen miles the Soviet officials had furnished a special car and a special train. Nothing was too good for Mr. Davies and the Americans, although I suspected most of this attention was for the onetime Ambassador. He was certainly personally popular with the Kremlin.

This short train trip was the beginning of a fantastic adventure in hospitality-accepting, and I've been fortunate enough to enjoy quite a bit of it in my day.

The steel wheels had just commenced to click over the broad steel rails when our Soviet hosts produced the vodka bottle. I say bottle, it was a matter of several decanters, all properly iced.

As he was feeling ill, Davies waved it away. We felt honor bound not to let him down. We took on all the hospitality the Siberians had to offer.

Events happened quickly after the first round of iced vodka and caviar in the special car. The hard core of the hospitality accepters consisted of Major John Waldron, Commander John S. Young, and myself.

We were met at the Novosibirsk railway station by a caravan of open automobiles. Accompanied by two Russians, deputy Siberian commissars no less, we started down the main street. I don't know who the people thought we were, but they turned out in large numbers and cheered us from the sidewalks. We cheered them and waved back.

We were soon on the outskirts of this large, sprawling industrial city, and after about a half hour's ride we arrived at what must have been some commissar's *dacha.* It was a well-built, well-kept, two-story house in spacious grounds sitting near the eastern bank of the Ob. We tumbled out and a covey of civilian flunkies took our luggage and showed us to our rooms. Waldron and I elected to share a room, and this

was a wise decision for alone neither of us would have been able to get up in time to make the airport the following morning.

We had been in our room about five minutes when *chai* (tea) was announced. There was some tea, but we had no more contact with it than we did with the waters of the river Ob. Again the vodka was iced and this time there was hot toast and soft butter.

Tea was followed by a short intermission. I don't know if someone played beneath the windows, but there were several guitarists stationed about the *dacha* and they played and sang as we rested for dinner. This intermission saved us, for a full-scale Russian dinner, beginning with vodka and *zakuski* and ending with ice cream à la Grand Hotel, champagne, and Armenian cognac, lay ahead of us.

Mr. Davies was too ill, or too smart, to show up for the dinner so we had to carry on for him here, too. General Burns performed magnificently, as did all other members of the company.

The hard core continued to drink toast for toast with the toughest and biggest of the Siberians, and several dozen toasts later I discovered myself in a wrestling match with a Deputy Commissar the size of a Russian bear. This was bad enough, but the floor had just been waxed in our honor.

The Commissar and I wrestled all over the place. First he'd be on top and then I'd be on top. And the suit I was wearing became a waxy mess. It was blue serge and the only suit I owned. When we called a halt to the wrestling match, both of us were in high good humor and both as waxed as a bull fiddle bow.

I think it was something after midnight when our hosts invited us outside for a concert. I couldn't imagine what lay

in store, but they led us down a piney path to an opening in the woods, sat us in deeply cushioned armchairs, poked up a campfire, and produced a colonel of the Red Army. The colonel shook hands all around and then stood before us at attention, did an about-face, and blew shrilly on a whistle.

Soldiers, dozens of them, stepped from the forest around us and took up positions behind the roaring campfire. While we were watching this, a squadron of Siberian mosquitoes (said to be the meanest in the world) sighted us and attacked. They stung like tiny flames, and when the Commissar saw our plight he bellowed fresh instructions into the night. About ten or twelve men approached from behind waving pine boughs. They fanned the air about our heads and mercifully kept the insects away for the rest of the night.

A group of musicians playing balalaikas, accordions, and guitars now flanked the soldiers who'd stepped from the woods. More iced vodka was passed up and down our line and the Commissar gave the signal for the concert to begin. A large orange moon rose behind us and threw great shafts of soft light over the scene. The wide river stood out like a mammoth piece of silver tape, twined between the tall pine and fir trees.

I love Russian folk music and Gypsy music and that's what they gave us this night out there in central Siberia on the banks of the river Ob. Considering the setting, the fact that I was going home, the burning urge to help Tamara, the hospitality of our hosts, and the never ending procession of vodka glasses, it was quite an evening for me.

Those deep minor chords that are such a part of Russian music always do something to me and I frankly confess I was deeply moved.

We reached our *dacha* bedrooms about two-thirty in the

morning. We fell into bed. I did manage to remove my highly waxed suit and to take off my shoes. But when I was awakened by a Russian blowing on a bugle in the room at seven o'clock—just four and a half hours after we'd gone to sleep—I discovered I hadn't taken off my shirt or tie.

Watching Russians go through a nonstop evening of drinking taught me one thing—keep eating and you won't get into trouble. Well, not much trouble. That morning I forced myself to eat eggs and raw bacon (the Russians often serve it raw). I couldn't even look at the salted fish that was produced. I took one glass of spirit (the practically straight alcohol that is drunk in Siberia), downed three glasses of tea, and ate nearly a half loaf of brown bread, and then began to pull my aching head out of my laced boot (this is a Russian expression and an apt one).

We reached the airport in automobiles and great pain.

The crew chief informed us something was wrong with one of the plane's four engines. There was nothing to do but to sit there in the open, under an increasingly hot Siberian sun, and wait. Wait we did, too, for it was just before lunch that the crew chief admitted he and his boys were getting nowhere with the engine.

A three-star Russian Air Force general had been standing by all morning watching the work but saying nothing. Six or eight Russian airmen, all privates, were with him. At last he suggested that maybe his men could repair the motor. I remember the crew chief's skepticism, but he said all right and the plane's captain, a Major Corrigan, told the general to let his boys loose on the job.

I don't like to admit this, but those Russkis got that engine started in about twenty minutes and we never had any more trouble the rest of the way. This has been the one contradic-

tion to my often expressed theory that the great Slavic soul has very little in common with machinery, especially modern airplane engines.

Our next halt was Krasnoyarsk, and then we turned northeast and halted briefly at that faraway city in northern Siberia called Yakutsk. Here, the N.K.V.D. colonel who'd been accompanying us said good-by and deplaned, as the airline companies say. He gave us each a hammer and sickle insignia of the Red Army, Red Air Force, and Red everything else, saluted, and said good-by again.

I was to see this fellow many times in later years, checking documents on parade days in Red Square and on entering the press box at sessions of the Supreme Soviet in the Kremlin. Despite the fact I rode halfway across the world with him in an airplane, laughed, joked, drank, and ate with him, he never after acknowledged he remembered me.

Grim fellows those N.K.V.D., now M.V.D., boys.

We reached Nome, Alaska, in time for Davies, now feeling much better, to be called from his cabin and photographed. We halted for sleep in Fairbanks, but there was little sleeping, for the sun shone brightly at three o'clock in the morning. The things I remember most about Fairbanks was an American Army post exchange and my first bottle of Coca-Cola in what seemed an eternity. I also bought a hamburger and I felt at home.

In Spokane, where we spent the next night, we recovered sufficiently from Novosibirsk to enjoy the warm hospitality turned on by the fair citizens of that fair city.

John Young introduced me to a crowded night club as "Commissar Verismutty, fresh from the Siberian steppe, a man who holds five records for excellence in sharpshooting on the Russo-German front."

The Russians were very popular in the U.S.A. in those days and people applauded wildly. I felt it would be a shocking thing to disappoint them and to let them learn Young had taken them in. So, I rose in my waxed blue serge suit and made a stirring speech in broken English. When I finished the applause was louder than before and I'm sure the people who heard me thought they were listening to some very frank and friendly talk from a Soviet commissar.

I advocated everything from free land for the Russian peasant to the restoration of the Tsar and the abolition of the income tax in the United States.

After I got through a lady in a green evening gown invited me to go to bed with her, saying she'd tried just about everything but a Russian.

From Spokane we flew to Washington, and then I took a plane to New York. The next day I was sitting with Wendell Willkie, having lunch in his office and speaking far more seriously. I told him the whole story of Tamara.

"What can I do to help?" he asked.

"Do you feel that you could take this matter up with Stalin?" I asked.

"Of course I can," he said without hesitation. "What do you want me to say?"

I said I thought he should send Stalin a telegram.

"Write out what you want me to say," Willkie told me, "and I'll be glad to send it."

I asked him to give me a day to think it over. We talked about Russia and the world in general and the future. I liked this man tremendously and I liked being around him. I always felt better for being in his presence and talking with him. He was a man of great charm and sincerity and he often told me how humble he became when he realized how many

millions of Americans actually voted for him to be President of the United States. He said that he would never forget those votes. I for one shall never forget Wendell Willkie.

That night I mailed him a draft of the telegram I thought he should send to Stalin if Tamara were to be returned to Moscow and if I were to be allowed to go back to the U.S.S.R. and marry her. I flew down to Washington, arranged some personal business, had a few teeth filled, and accepted a kind invitation to speak at the National Press Club. Just before I entered the building I received a telephone call from Willkie.

"I have a reply from Stalin," he said. "It was sent on to me from a Mr. Gromyko, the Soviet chargé d'affaires in Washington."

I hung on every word.

"Here," said Willkie, "I'll read it to you."

He did. Stalin said he was "making an exception because of your personal vouching," and that Willkie's request would be complied with.

There's an old expression about not being able to find words with which to give thanks. I had no such trouble. I poured out my thanks.

Three days later I had a telegram from Moscow.

I BACK HOME WITH MAMA STOP I LOVE YOU STOP I WAIT FOR YOU STOP HURRY UP HONEY YOUR TAMARA.

Quite naturally I told a few friends about what had happened. Someone telephoned me to check details. The following morning I was in North Carolina and I had a telephone call from Kent Cooper.

He congratulated me on my good news and then his voice grew stern. "You're a hell of an AP man," he said. "You let us

get scooped on your own story. The greatest love story of the war."

"Scooped?" I gasped.

"Yes. Scooped. You and Tamara are all over the front page of the New York *Times.*"

I went out and got a copy of the *Times.* He was right. And I believe that's the only time I really let the AP down on a story.

22

Getting back to Russia turned out tough again.

Iran was still the only open door and there were but two ways to reach that country—by plane all the way from the United States, or by military sea transport to Egypt, and then by army plane. I chose the latter route.

One section of the convoy made up at Charleston, South Carolina, and this was pleasant for me for I could visit an aunt and uncle I hadn't seen for a long time. My ship was the *David F. Houston,* a liberty ship. From Charleston we hurried by night to Norfolk and then proceeded to wait around for six days. We didn't get off the ship, even once.

When all the vessels got together we shaped up into a large convoy and the journey across the Atlantic to Gibraltar was without incident. But after we entered the Mediterranean things began to happen.

We knew it wasn't going to be easy, and those of us on the *David F. Houston* (there was much speculation what the *F* stood for, and I had very definite ideas on the subject) were most uncomfortable at times because we were carrying ammunition.

"There'll be no lifeboat drills on this ship," said the captain the first day at sea, "because there's no point in holding them. If anything hits this ship you needn't bother about lifeboats. This cargo of explosives will see to it that you get off, all right. You'll go right straight up in the air."

Not very funny.

I still don't know why the Army put me on a munitions carrier, but there I was and there was nothing to be done about it. I became doubly uncomfortable when I discovered that although I was only in my mid-thirties I was older than the captain, the chief engineer, and the first officer. I'm all for youth, but not that much so. Especially when it's my skin that youth's in charge of.

It became downright alarming one night in a fog when one of the young officers who stood regular watches confided in me that this was not only his first voyage, but the first time he'd ever been to sea.

"My God," I fairly shouted, "how did you get on board?"

"Oh, don't get scared," he said. "I've been going to school. On land, of course," he added.

That first night on the Mediterranean I was down in the officers' mess indulging in a game of hearts that went on day and night on the *David F.* There was a heavy bump, as if the ship had struck a mudbank. We looked at one another and then beat it up on deck. The entire sea around us appeared to be ablaze. Guns were going off in all directions.

"What's happening?" I asked the captain.

"How the hell would I know?" he replied.

Off to one side two ships in our convoy were afire. A dark form, low on the water, passed us. One of our guns let go.

"Hold your goddamned fire," shouted an unmistakably

American voice through a loud-speaker from the dark object. "This is the Navy."

I could feel the engines beneath me throbbing as we took on extra speed. In a few minutes it was evident that we had parted company with our convoy.

"Are you taking evasive action?" I asked the captain.

"Evasive action, hell," he said. "I'm just getting out on my own. Boy, if anything hits us, we'll all end up in yon blue heaven. I'm getting away from this convoy. I don't like it at a time like this."

During the nights of the biggest Luftwaffe raids on London I had found that the greatest air-raid shelter in the world was a full bottle of scotch. If I had one of those on hand I was among the bravest of the brave. But here we were traveling on an American transport, where whisky was not allowed. At least during the war. I wasn't feeling too brave, and every once in a while I had the sensation that any second the *David F.* was going to go up in one glorious tower of flame. It was while I was floundering in one of these moods that the captain eased up to me and said in a whisper, "Gilmore, go down in my cabin and look in the second layer of my locker. Bring it up here."

"Yes, sir."

I felt quite certain I knew what he meant by "it."

An order has never been carried out with more dispatch on the high seas. The bottle was Johnnie Walker, Black Label. One of my favorites.

"Have a bruise," said the youthful commander.

I did and he did.

"Ring the engine room and see how the boys are getting on down there," he ordered.

I called the engine room.

"Kelly's poolroom," said a voice on the other end, "Kelly speaking!"

I couldn't help but smile. That attitude down in the engine room, where you really don't have a chance in a submarine attack, and the Johnnie Walker, Black, put me back in focus. I didn't even flinch when, aft of us, I saw another one of our ships catch fire.

I had another bruise, as the captain called it.

"Pretty night," I told him.

"Nice and bright and full of illumination," said the master. "How I like illumination. That damned fire makes a sitting duck out of us. Imagine how we look silhouetted against it."

He shouted some orders and rang some bells.

"Now what?"

"I'm really going to get away from this convoy this time," he answered.

I'd always been told that there was nothing worse than a single ship lagging behind or getting off on its own when in convoy. That such a ship was real meat for a sub.

"What did you do before the war?" I asked the captain, trying to make conversation.

"I was a male nurse in a nut house," he said.

"May I have another drink?" I asked.

We rode out the night and nothing else happened. I mean no more ships were sunk. Dawn came and there wasn't a vessel or a destroyer in sight. I knew we were maintaining radio silence.

"How are we going to join up with the convoy?" I inquired.

"Damned if I know," the captain replied.

But he did it. By noon we were with the other ships once

more. Out on the coffin corner because we carried ammunition. If our ship got hit our explosion would do less damage to the rest of the convoy if we were in the front line, first ship on the left. Or that's how it was explained to me. Early in the afternoon we saw a ship on fire. It wasn't far away. Two destroyers were standing by her. I saw no one in the water. The night turned out quiet and many of us had a good sleep. The next day we resumed our hearts game. At lunch the captain came in cursing.

"We've been ordered to reduce speed," he announced.

"Why?" I asked in muffled anguish.

"To make it easier for the subs to hit us," he said.

This WAS the damnedest ship.

We dragged along for two days at what I thought was ridiculously slow speed. I don't know anything about knots, but we couldn't have been traveling over four miles an hour as an automobile goes. Somewhere near Crete an enemy plane flew in on us out of the sunset and uncoupled a torpedo. But it missed and we drove off the plane. It didn't return.

"Still going slow?" I asked the captain the next time I went up on the bridge.

"Sure. They're disappointed. They ain't hit any of us yet."

We reached Port Said the following day, and entering the Suez Canal was a pleasing sensation. We realized our chances of getting hit by a submarine, or anything else, were now slim. We took on a French pilot, a nice, talkative, bald man in white shorts and a mess jacket. He said his wife was in rizona painting sunsets.

The Suez Canal is quite narrow in parts, I discovered, and at the narrowest of these places British soldiers seemed to be stationed.

"Hoi," said the first one I noticed. "Why don't you bloody

Yanks stay out of this ditch? We want to swim. You're only buggering up the water."

The *David F. Houston* had an officer named Red Wood. He possessed the greatest vocabulary of curse words I have ever encountered in the English language.

"Red," I called, "come here, Red. We need you."

He wasn't far away and he came running.

I pointed to the Englishmen on the bank of the canal.

"You bell-headed limey sons of bitches," he bellowed as his opening salvo, and then he filled the Oriental air with an extremely colorful review of the British as a race. This original group of His Majesty's forces had been left far behind by this time, but Red was jet-propelled and his fuel gauge showed full.

The ship's foghorn was the only thing I'd heard that could match Red in volume. He was going full blast when we passed another group of soldiers on the bank. This party was minding its business. The force and violence of Red's volley left them speechless. They stared at us, openmouthed and mute, as he reflected most grossly upon their parentage, their flag, their customs, and even their King.

This went on for hours. He was certainly our secret weapon, and apparently there was nothing in the world that infuriated Red so much as the sight of an English soldier standing along the bank of the ditch Disraeli built.

I admire a perfectionist. At cursing and name calling he was tops. I've heard two or three Russian peasants and former droshky drivers who could outcurse him, perhaps, but they were working in a different language. Russian is said to be the easiest language in the world to curse in. I am convinced it is. But I've often contemplated the obvious possibilities of Red Wood learning Russian. He didn't just use a

stream of vulgar words. He built a solid base of graphic words about the object of his denunciation and then he fired long shafts of highly vitriolic adjectives and spectacular nouns onto his withering target. Unlike some mighty cursers I have heard, Red did repeat himself. He said he did so for emphasis.

I had a letter from him not long ago. His letters are interesting and colorful, but the shouted insult is his medium. He has a ship of his own nowadays and life aboard should be hell, or awfully amusing. It all depends on one's feel for language.

When we reached Great Bitter Lake we dropped anchor for the night. Red regaled us with a highly novel account of the doings of the ancient children of Israel when they once passed this way.

"Over there, on that shore," he said, pointing.

The next day brought us to Suez. I put on my war correspondent's uniform, said good-by all around, and climbed into a motor launch that had been sent out to fetch two of us who were quitting the ship.

"I know what the *F* in *David F. Houston* stands for," I called as I waved farewell. "It stands for fun."

23

Teheran had changed a lot since I'd seen it last, for now the American Army had moved in. This was the very able command that moved oceans of Lend-Lease material to the Soviets. It was one of the great operations of the war.

I went to the army camp for a while and there I shared a bungalow in the V.I.P. section with that delightful writer,

reporter, and human being, Joel Sayre. He is a marvelous storyteller and we swapped them far into every Persian night. We went to the army theater together and we took in the night clubs together. Joel was definitely in charge of the situation in Teheran and he seemed to be able to command a car and driver whenever he wanted them. My old friend, Tim Timmerman, who was still reorganizing the police departments, was on hand as well as a lot of other people I knew. One of the most attractive of these was Al Hine, who after the war turned out to be a writer of much talent. At Intourist even Mr. Travkin, the schedule wrecker, was still on duty.

"No plane for you tomorrow, Mr. Gilmore," he smiled. "Maybe next Friday."

I knew luck was with me now. I'd get to Moscow somehow.

One day when I called at Intourist, Mr. Travkin looked depressed. I inquired if he were ill.

"No."

"Then what's the matter?"

"Nothing. Oh, by the way, you're definitely on tomorrow's Moscow plane."

The greatest joy in Travkin's life was informing people they couldn't take his plane. When he finally had to put you on his day was ruined. He was typical of the Russian petty bureaucrat. There are thousands of them in that country and they've been there for many, many years. Lenin recognized the vice of bureaucracy inherent in the Russians and in one of his works he warned his Bolshevik party against it. No matter. They remained bureaucrats and they will remain bureaucrats for a very long time.

We made the trip to Moscow in one day. I grew quite

nervous as we neared the city and I began to recognize landmarks. I saw Tamara through a window as the plane rolled to a halt in front of the badly plastered administration building of the military airport. I felt warm all over as I rushed out of the ship dragging my belongings behind me.

"Hoaney," she shouted, "you look lik de general."

Tamara had never seen me in uniform before.

Appearances are deceiving. In uniform I could be Zhukov's brother. He told me that once.

Tamara fell into my arms and we had a very happy reunion. Henry Cassidy was on hand to welcome me back. And Pavel, the driver, and a lot of friends.

Tamara and I agreed we'd better get married as soon as possible.

"John Waldron is back," she told me, "and he and Tanya are getting married this week."

It was true, and Tamara and I went along to Zags (the registration office) with them.

A Soviet official was halfway through the ceremony when a youth who worked for the new chief of the American Military Mission, an able and intelligent major general, J. Russell Deane, rushed into the room.

"Major Waldron, Major Waldron," he called. "The general's been looking everywhere for you. He wants you this very minute."

John explained it would be difficult for him to come along right now.

"He's sore as hell," said Arthur. "You gotta come. He's gonna send you home if you don't."

Waldron hesitated for a moment.

"Here, Eddy," he said, "finish up this ceremony for me and I'll see you all later."

He gave Tanya a fleeting kiss and a hug.

I stood by answering questions for the Zags official, then signed John's name, handed over the fifteen rubles for the marriage certificate, and kissed the bride.

"Tanya," I said in English, "I don't know which one of us is legally married to you, John or I."

"*Ya ne ponemaiyo,*" she said, shaking her pretty head.

"I don't blame you a bit," I told her.

Four or five days later Tamara and I presented ourselves at this Zags office. The official examined our documents, excused himself, and went into an adjoining room. Through the closed door we heard him using the telephone. He hung up and returned to us.

"I'm sorry," he explained, "but you'll have to go over to the Raion Soviet. This is a special case."

I thanked him and we left.

"What's he so polite about?" I muttered.

"We special case," laughed Tamara.

At the Raion Soviet, which stands just across the street from Moscow Radio, we were instructed to come back in two days. We did. And waited. After about forty-five minutes a smiling, dowdy woman came up to us, shook hands, and asked us to follow her. She led us into a room that seemed to be filled with potted palms, rubber plants, and Russians. The Russians were seated in what looked to be two jury boxes facing one another. Three men and two women sat at the end of the room where the judge should be sitting.

"What the hell is this?" I said to myself.

"Comrade Kolb-Chernashovaya, stand up," said one of the voices from the judges' box. Tamara stood.

"Gospodin Eddy Gilmore, stand up." I stood.

"Your application to register your marriage is in order and

it has been approved," continued the voice from the bench. "Hurrah!"

At this point every Russian in the place stood up and started applauding. Then they came down around us and congratulated us. Another one handed us a piece of paper. It was the marriage certificate. We thanked everyone profusely and left. I was still a bit dazed from the ceremony.

"That was all because of Stalin," said Tamara. "Remember, he approved this marriage."

"Why, the old bastard."

"Don't use such language in front of your wife," she snapped back.

The diplomatic corps had returned to Moscow from Kuibyshev while I'd been away in America, and when we returned to the Metropole we found our very first invitation as Mr. and Mrs. Gilmore. It was to a sit-down dinner at the apartment of a Swedish friend.

"But what shall I wear?" asked Tamara. "I've never been to a party before as Mrs. Gilmore."

"Just the same as before," I told her, "but look more serious."

She put on one of the dresses I'd bought for her in the States and she looked beautiful. I have always thought that Tamara wears any dress exceedingly well. She certainly did this evening. The party was at the Moscow home of Ingamar and Inyard Haggloff. They have been old and good friends.

"Now that you are married," said Inyard, "you must begin thinking about getting Tamara out of Russia."

"Not yet," I told her. "A war's on. I've got to see this one out."

And the war was very much on. Violently so. During the first months of our married life I made many trips to the front

and as Bill Downs, of CBS, used to say, "Never to hear a gun fired in anger."

Getting to and from the front wasn't my only problem during the next year. When it became apparent that Tamara was going to have a baby I really did have something to think about.

One could buy hardly anything in Moscow.

I scrounged around, gave commissions to people who were going to Teheran or Cairo, and had almost everything arranged except what might have been the most important item of all. I'd forgotten all about baby bottles.

Now, the problem presented itself, how to get them?

There were very few foreign women in the diplomatic colony at this time. They came on later, when things became slightly more normal. During the war the Soviets didn't encourage the diplomats to bring in their families, and for many good reasons.

I knew that Eric Johnston was coming to Moscow shortly and I sent the president of the United States Chamber of Commerce a cable asking him to bring me a set of baby bottles. And nipples.

I don't know what Eric thought, but when he arrived he had the bottles and the nipples, supplied by my good friend, William H. Hager, Jr., of Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

"I've had a lot of commissions in my life," laughed Johnston. "But this was the strangest. It was a pleasure to bring them halfway across the world."

Getting a place for Tamara in a maternity home wasn't easy either. Once more I had to go to Burobin, via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They assured me at last she could have a place at Bauminskaya Maternity Home.

Tamara received her warning about three o'clock in the

morning. Our automobile had long stopped running. There were no taxis. I knew of only one man who had a car, and possibly a chauffeur, at this time of the morning—the American Ambassador.

I telephoned him and got him out of bed.

I shall forever be thankful to my friend Averell Harriman for personally seeing to it that his chauffeur was awakened and dispatched to the Gilmore residence. It was about twelve miles to the hospital. As we were traveling in the Ambassador's car we moved through the quiet streets with great speed. I happened to look through the back window and noticed we were being trailed by a secret police car. I smiled.

"Why you laugh?" asked Tamara.

"The boys," I said, "they even follow us when we're going to have a baby.

That night, in a cold, bare room with seven or eight other women in labor pains, Tamara gave birth to an eight-pound girl. She was born during a salute in celebration of the liberation by the Red Army of three Russian cities.

The Muscovy skies were filled with rockets, searchlights, and salvos from anti-aircraft guns.

"Since she was born in the middle of a salute," said Tamara, "I'd like to name her something having to do with victory, but the Russian word for victory, *pobeda,* is not a name to give such a beautiful girl child as this."

"How would you like Victoria?" I asked.

"That was the name of a great queen, wasn't it?"

"It surely was."

"Then she shall be Victoria after a victory and a queen."

"And if you don't mind," I put in, "I'd like her middle name to be Wendell. He shall always be something of a king in my book."

Victoria Wendell Gilmore.

"She looks like me," I told Tamara.

"Mr. Harriman," she said, "says that all babies look like you and Churchill."

Come to think of it, they do.

24

Before Vicki was born there was another big event in my life in Russia—a visit to the Stalingrad front.

Once glance at the map of Russia and anyone can see that the invader who reaches the Volga cuts one of the life lines of the nation.

This long deep river is a mighty traffic artery. It brings oil and fish from Baku and the Caspian, and precious grain from the broad fertile lands along the middle Volga. In peacetime its ships hauled tractors from the huge factory at Stalingrad and in wartime it moved the tanks the tractor plant was now turning out.

In addition to being a city of generous size, Stalingrad was strategically important, sitting there on the high western bank of the river, between Astrakhan and Moscow.

Psychologically it was not without significance for this was the biggest place in the Soviet Union named after the leader, Joseph Stalin. In the phony legend that has been built up (the late L. P. Beria was the author of one of them) about his civil war leadership, this was supposed to have been the city that Stalin saved from the Bolsheviks—a citadel captured and held by his military genius.

For all these reasons, and probably some others, Hitler wanted Stalingrad and his armies pressed hard upon it.

Down to the immediate southwest of the city was a town named Kotelnikovo. It showed up in dispatches from the front many times. We were informed that a tremendous battle was taking place in this region and we asked to be taken to see it. One night permission was granted.

We left Moscow by train in January 1943. There must have been about fourteen of us, American and British correspondents and three translators. At Saratov, up the Volga some distance from Stalingrad, the conducting officers—press department officials and men from the Red Army general staff—escorted us off our special railway car and led us to a banquet in the local hotel. In some ways this was a mistake, for a recently arrived colleague took this occasion to learn about vodka. He had been cooped up on a small ship from Australia to the Persian Gulf. He should be excused for whatever happened.

This particular correspondent was a large man, weighing close to 225 pounds. Unable to fit himself out properly in Australia he set about the task in Teheran. The coat some sharpster sold him in the bazaar to keep out the Russian cold was truly a garment to behold. It was burnt orange in color. It had no buttons, but wrapped around the body. To keep the coat closed he used an old Sam Brown belt. The coat was made from the skin of some very old Arabian dogs. It had a fringe of small leather strips around its every edge. The lining was of sheepskin, and it smelled to high heaven. From someplace he had acquired what is known in some regions of the United States as a coonskin cap. A candidate for the Democratic party nomination for the presidency wore one in the campaign of 1952. For footwear this correspondent chose Royal Air Force flying boots.

These boots were very heavy, also lined with sheepskin,

and as they had been worn by at least a dozen Persians before they reached the market, they too smelled.

At our Saratov banquet the new correspondent lapped up all the vodka in sight, and by the time the officials were ready to get us back on the train he was a blubbering mass.

For some reason—Russia was always like this—our transport disappeared, and we had to foot it back to the railway station. This meant carrying our colleague. I repeat he was heavy, and in addition he insisted on singing as we half carried, half dragged him through the snowy streets.

Dressed as he was, drunk as he was, and as musical as he was, he attracted a large crowd. It grew larger as we went along, and by the time we got to the station several hundred people were following us. On the station platform our friend stiffened, stood erect, pushed aside those who had been piloting and carrying him, and said in a loud voice, "Listen to me."

We tried to haul him the few remaining yards to the car, but he was hard to budge.

"No. I must speak. I insist on speaking."

I suppose the cold air had revived him. That and the several kicks in the pants that had been applied to keep him upright.

"Comrades," he screamed to the crowd. "Comrades, you think you live in a promised land. It's true. You do, for much is promised. But, comrades, to tell you the truth——"

A man from the press department pleaded with him to stop. But our colleague wouldn't be censored.

"Get away from me, you despicable lackey. You, you murderer of the noblest things in the world—words. You word killer."

He had some trouble with this last bit.

"Comrades," he said as he addressed the crowd again. These smiling Russians didn't understand a word he was saying, but they appreciate a drunk.

"Comrades, do you know the noblest thing in the world next to a word? No, of course you don't. I shall tell you. The noblest thing in the world next to a noble word is a British peer. Now, give me an English lord——"

"Oh, for God's sake," said one of our number as he walked up to our oratorical colleague and smacked him on the chin.

That was the end of the speech. The big man sagged to the snow. We picked him up and hauled him the remaining distance to the sleeping car. As we wrestled his inert form into a lower berth he once more showed signs of life and began to sing.

"A Manchester journalist named Werth . . ." he commenced, but he got no further. He was asleep. I had the next compartment. Once or twice during the night, after our train had moved to the other side of the Volga above Stalingrad, I heard his drunken though stentorian tones.

"A policeman from Birmingham Junction . . ."

A long pause.

"From deep in a crypt at St. Giles . . ."

He could never get beyond those first sentences.

The next morning he was dreadfully hung over. Sick at his stomach, guilty of conscience, and in much pain. We were all sympathetic. All except one lady translator. She was aloof and indignant, and she certainly paid for her attitude later.

By noon our train was rolling slowly down what appeared to be a new and hurriedly laid railway line. It paralleled the Volga and from the burned-out railway cars, locomotives, and a few dead bodies, it was evident that we were not far from the front.

"This part of the trip may be dangerous," said a press department official. This man later lost his life conducting a group of us to the western front. The jeep in which he and three other Russians were riding ran over a mine and exploded it. The explosion killed Mr. Korzhamakov instantly, as it did another censor. It blew the legs off a general staff major and he died after a few days.

But today he was in luck. It may have been dangerous but no danger showed up. About one in the afternoon we reached a military point on the eastern bank of the Volga that I judged to be about ten miles on the Soviet-held side of Stalingrad. We could hear the guns in the distance and many planes were overhead. Planes from the Red Air Force, fortunately.

After lunch and a rest in what appeared to be a field hospital, out of which the patients had probably been pitched to make room for us we loaded ourselves into a convoy of American Studebaker trucks and moved off in the general direction of Stalingrad.

In connection with the Studebaker truck, let me say that this vehicle, as well as I could tell from the numerous trips I made to the front and the rear, was the mainstay of the Red Army in the last war. One saw them everywhere. You encountered other American trucks, too. Fords and Dodges, but not in the large numbers as you did Studebakers. The Soviets liked them very much. So much, in fact, that they copied this truck after the war and it is now produced in the U.S.S.R. under the name of the Molotov truck.

I don't recall Mr. Molotov having claimed he invented it, however.

As we neared the river there seemed to be a perpetual sunset in front of us, but it was caused by gun flares from the

battle of Stalingrad, and not the setting sun. By keeping our eyes on this we could see that we were veering off towards the south. It was dark when we went over a wooden bridge laid over the Volga ice. Sentries, muffled to their noses, stood every ten yards across that bridge, and once a German plane dropped a stick of bombs not too far away.

The Russian officer sitting next to me smiled.

"They hit the ice," he said. "Easiest bomb damage in the world to repair. You just let the water in the bomb crater freeze again."

I wanted to ask him if this was a Russian invention, but I refrained.

We reached the western, the Stalingrad bank of the Volga, and made what I was certain was a wrong turn. But the conducting officer said nothing and I kept my silence. Ours was the lead truck, and after we had gone about five miles the gunfire and the cannonading was most definitely getting louder. I grew uneasy and asked the officer if we weren't going the wrong way.

He listened to me attentatively and then beat on the driver's cab.

"Tovarich chauffeur," he called, "Tovarich chauffeur!"

The comrade chauffeur stopped the truck. A long conversation followed in Russian. While they were talking several shapes emerged from the dark. There was light enough to see one Red Army officer and several soldiers.

A most animated discussion took place, and it ended up by the comrade chauffeur hastily turning around—which caused every other truck in the convoy to do the same thing—and beat it back down the road on which we'd been traveling. The difference was that this time we went twice as fast.

"The devil take me," said the officer next to me. "Oi!"

I asked him his trouble.

"God of mine," he said, "we were going straight into the German lines."

Being in Russia was tough enough, but I certainly didn't want to be a prisoner of the Germans in Russia. That would have been tougher still.

We rolled through most of the night, but at last halted at a village named Rai Gorod. I learned with some interest that this meant Paradise City. Everything is relative, and in some way this huddle of huts near the western bank of the Volga, about thirty miles south of Stalingrad, was paradise. The Soviets gave us a warm supper and beds that were bugless, though extremely uncomfortable.

The next day we bumped through the edges of the Kalmuck Steppe and the scene of what had been some violent tank fighting. We saw forty or fifty wrecked and badly damaged German and Soviet tanks and a lot of smashed-up equipment of war.

By nightfall we were in Kotelnikovo. We were expected, thank goodness. This wasn't always the case. Sometimes we would arrive at our destination on the front and the command knew nothing about us at all. Or pretended it didn't. But this time plans had been well made to receive us. We were parceled out and assigned in pairs to various huts belonging to peasants who hadn't moved with the war.

Walter Kerr and I drew the same house. A middle-aged man and his wife greeted us hospitably and showed us to a neat small room with two beds. The walls were whitewashed and there were icons in the corners. A fire burned in the big, oblong brick oven so common to the houses of Russian peasants. There was no chance of our getting cold.

Walter and I lay down and tried to sleep, for we were very

tired. The peasant and his wife were talking in the next room. Nothing is private in a peasant's hut, least of all conversation. We could hear everything they said and understood most of it.

Kerr and I had been in England for some of the heaviest bombing of the war. How often we had heard the drone of an airplane overhead and listened to some Londoner say to another, "One of ours."

It was a country-wide joke that when someone said "One of ours" the plane was sure to be one of theirs and that bombs usually followed.

It happened with uncanny regularity.

Down here in a hut in Kotelnikovo we heard the unmistakable sound of a twin-motored airplane. The sound grew louder.

"*Ita nasha,*" said the peasant in the next room.

"*Ita nasha*" means "This is ours."

The inevitable happened.

The peasant's assurances to his wife were followed by a series of terrific explosions, and not too far away. A German bomber had dropped a stick.

The hut shook, and some of the flaky whitewash flew off the ceiling and walls.

From his bed I heard Walter laugh.

"*Ita nasha,*" he said. "It's the same the whole world over."

We both agreed that as we'd never been in an air-raid shelter in England during the blitz there was little point in trying to find one in the village of Kotelnikovo, down on the Kalmuck Steppe.

"Then good night," I said.

"*Ita nasha,*" Walter chuckled.

25

After our first breakfast in Kotelnikovo, I walked out into the town to look around and there I saw a sight that shocked me as much as anything during the war.

It was on a side street and I saw two figures walking towards me along the snow-covered cobblestones. The first was a Soviet soldier. He held a rope in his hand and the other end of the rope was attached to the neck of a thin, wild-eyed man in the uniform of a Rumanian private.

As they reached me the Russian soldier saluted and said something to the man he was leading along like a dog on two feet. The Rumanian prisoner dropped to his all fours and loped along behind his captor, looking at me and smiling, an expression of horrible and pathetic embarrassment on his face.

The Soviet man called out another order and the prisoner got to his feet, brushed the snow off his knees, and shuffled on off down the street, still being led by the neck.

I witnessed some terrible things in the Soviet Union during the war. A stack of half-burned bodies in an Estonian prison camp. This was a group of fifty or sixty corpses that were described to us as Jewish civilians the Germans had buried alive. I looked out of my hotel window in Kiev, capital of the Ukraine, one morning and saw the bodies of three German soldiers, and one Russian peasant, dangling by their necks and very dead. And many unspeakable sights. The stark and frightened eyes of a group of Germans just before they were hanged in a public square in Kharkov. The faces of people just out of Soviet concentration camps. But nothing,

I'm sure, affected me as much as that Rumanian being led down the street by his neck and made to get down on his hands and knees and hobble along.

The Germans and the Rumanians committed some awful acts in the U.S.S.R. during the war and I certainly make no brief for this, but utter humiliation of the human being can often be more shocking than spilled blood and twisted necks.

Later that day we were taken over some of the battlefields. Scores and scores of burned-out and blasted tanks. A whole field of German bombers and fighter planes. And stacks and stacks of bombs. I'd heard a lot about the "whistling" bombs that the Luftwaffe dropped on the front lines, but I'd never seen them before. Here they were, whistles made of some sort of composition, attached to the fins of the bombs.

"They frightened our soldiers very much at the beginning," explained a colonel, "but we became accustomed to them. They are no worse than any other bombs."

They showed us a direct artillery hit on a German anti-aircraft battery. Nine German bodies, their uniforms in ribbons, and the boots blown or stripped from their legs.

Our host at lunch that day was Colonel General Malinovsky, now Marshal Malinovsky. He received us in a small wooden schoolhouse near the banks of the frozen Don River. This was Cossack country.

"Welcome and greetings," said the general through a translator.

We walked down the room and took our seats around a horseshoe that had been formed out of long wooden tables. Here was the inevitable vodka, and the general proposed the first toast.

"To our American and British allies," he said.

"To the Red Army," said one of the correspondents as our glasses were refilled.

We stood and drank again.

"To President Roosevelt," said the general.

"To Marshal Stalin," one of us replied.

"To the American people."

"To the Russian people."

"To eternal friendship between the Soviet Union, the United States, and Great Britain."

We drank to everything. I think we even proposed a toast to the Don. Being down here on the Don and seeing this river meant a lot to me, for one of my favorite books written in the Soviet period was *And Quiet Flows the Don,* by Mikhail Sholokhov, a book about the Cossacks of this region.

The toast continued, and then the general decided he wanted to make a speech. A little unsteady, he rose at the head of the table. A translator stood by his side.

"I am a Russian who has been abroad," he said. "I was in France with the Russian expeditionary forces in the first world war. Did you ever hear of that outfit? No, I doubt that you did."

The general smiled. He was a very personable man. Short, broad-shouldered, clean-shaven, with thick black hair and very dark eyes. His uniform was resplendent.

"I was a sergeant. A machine gunner, and I fought alongside the Americans.

He paused again and beamed on us.

"I can always tell an American," he said. "Look, let me show you."

He then pointed out various Americans around the room. He made no mistakes. "The rest of you are Englishmen."

General Malinovsky didn't elaborate.

This seemed to be the end of his speech.

"To the American soldiers of this war and the last," he said, filling up his glass again.

We filled and joined him.

"Bottoms up," he commanded. "Bottoms up. No half glasses, please."

I got up.

"May I ask the general a question?"

The remark was translated to him.

He nodded.

"Did you ever learn any English as you fought alongside the American soldiers in France?"

"Yes," said General Malinovsky in English. "I learned 'hello, I love you, good night'."

At this point the heat of the Cossack schoolhouse and the warmth of the vodka got too much for one of our number, a tall distinguished British journalist. He rose and staggered for the door. Two Soviet privates were quick to jump to his assistance. They helped him out the door. A few minutes later I heard him speaking Russian.

"The door? the door?" he said. "I've got to find the schoolhouse before I can find the door. Please show me the schoolhouse."

We looked out the window. He was standing facing the building, blind-drunk, about ten feet away, shrugging in a hopeless gesture.

General Malinovsky suggested we go out and look at the Don, at one of the places where they cut back behind the Germans and trapped them. Noisily, we departed. I noticed the general was maneuvering no better than the rest of us.

We rode for a few miles in trucks and jeeps and then, at the general's command, got out of our transport.

"Follow me," called Malinovsky.

Single file, we walked down to the Don and the general and I tried the ice.

"It was just over there," he said.

There was a sharp crack. The ice broke and Colonel General Rodion Malinovsky and I plunged through the ice to our knees. Amid much shouting and excitement, we extricated ourselves. The commander was grinning.

Several hours of this day I am unable to account for, but I do recall that we returned to the Cossack schoolhouse and that some German prisoners were produced for us to question. The Russians were drawing tight the ring around the encircled Wehrmacht at Stalingrad. This called for unusual activity on the part of the Luftwaffe.

Day and night, Hitler was trying to supply his Stalingrad garrison by planes and, of course, the Soviets were shooting down a lot of these transport aircraft.

A tall blond lieutenant was brought into the room. Alexander Werth, who spoke German, as well as Russian, French, and, I suppose, Spanish and Italian, did the translating.

A Russian turned up the lights. The captive German officer looked about him and blinked. His right arm raised.

"Heil Hitler!" he said.

One of the Soviet officers grabbed his arm, pulled it down, and told him not to do that again. Werth translated. The lieutenant didn't answer.

We asked him his name. He gave it. We asked him how he happened to get shot down.

"Through my own errors," he said. "I am ashamed."

He was just that arrogant all the way through the interview, which produced little in the way of news.

"Do you realize," Werth told him, "that if you were a Rus-

sian prisoner of the Germans and behaved as you are behaving, you'd probably be shot by now?"

The lieutenant looked him in the eyes.

"Please," he replied, "if you want to shoot me, then shoot me."

We motioned the Soviet officers to take him away. This young Nazi, for he must have been one, stood at attention. "Heil Hitler," he said as he was taken from the room.

The remainder of the prisoners behaved as one expected prisoners to behave. They said the entire German Air Force knew the garrison at Stalingrad was doomed and that the encirclement came about through Hitler's refusal to withdraw at the proper time. That now they were all lost. It was only a question of time.

He was correct. Several weeks later we were in Stalingrad. The weather was bitter. The thing that impressed me most was not the damage to the city—for it was less than I thought it would be—but the large number of captives. A never ending line of them moved eastward over the frozen Volga all day long and far into the night. Their condition was not good and they were dirty and unshaven. They had been through quite an ordeal.

We were told we could interview Field Marshal von Paulus and marched along with a group of Red Army staff officers to a larger than usual wooden house. A colonel and a major stepped between the sentries of either side of the front door and very soon appeared with a tall, sad-looking man in the uniform of a German general.

"What is your name?" we asked him.

He surveyed us coldly. We were drawn up on the front porch of the house.

"Von Paulus," he said.

"Why didn't you surrender before and save all the bloodshed?" asked someone.

The field marshal turned on a well-polished heel.

"I'm sorry," he said as he marched back into the building.

I thought it odd at the time that the Soviets did not make him stay there and answer questions, for I'd seen them do that before. I didn't know then that they were saving Von Paulus. To use him in their postwar plans for Germany.

A great amount of pressure must have been put on this man, for he has appeared to be a willing Soviet pawn.

26

The Red Army, now called the Soviet Army, is a big, powerful force.

It is often badly dressed, particularly the soldiers and noncommissioned officers, and by Western standards, certainly poorly fed.

The men are strong—mostly of peasant stock—can work long hours without complaining. In fact, you never complain and remain healthy if you're in the Soviet Army. To do so would be regarded as a political crime and you'd get into all sorts of trouble.

The Red Army is shot full with political officers and members of and informers for the secret police. This is a weak point and also a strong one.

Some of the highest commanders in the Army shrink before the power of the secret police. Let me tell you about a classic case.

My wife and I stepped into an elevator at the Metropole Hotel one evening shortly after the war. We'd been to a cock-

tail party at the American Embassy and were on our way to a dinner with friends in their Metropole apartment, if it could be called an apartment.

With us was Arnold Smith, a bright young man from the External Affairs Department of the Canadian Government, and his pretty wife, Eve.

Just as the elevator was about to begin its slow, trembling journey up the ancient shaft at the Metropole, a Russian officer walked up to the wire grating and glass door and commenced to bang on it with a walking stick.

The elevator operator opened the door and let him in. The officer had enough stars on his shoulder boards to tell me that he was a general of an army—one slot below a marshal. He had an aide with him and he was a major.

I was feeling very happy after the cocktail party and anticipating a good dinner.

"Good evening, General," I said in Russian.

He looked at me.

"You address me as a general," he replied, "but do you know which general I am?"

"If I haven't made a mistake, you're General Yeremenko."

He was surprised.

"You are right. But how did you know?"

"Everyone knows General Yeremenko," I said, "and I certainly should, for I was a visitor on your front one time. You showed us around and we had dinner with you. I am an American correspondent."

"*Pravda, pravda,*" he said, "of course I remember."

The general swayed a little. I saw that he, too, had been to a cocktail party. At least he showed those signs. And I could smell vodka on his breath.

The elevator moved from the ground floor to the second

floor, where General Yeremenko's aide indicated his superior wanted to get off. The operator swung the door open.

"Close the door," commanded the general.

He was a broad man, but not tall. His shoulders were very wide, chest spacious, and stomach large. His legs, encased in shining black leather boots, were as thick as fence posts. His face was flat and florid and clean-shaven.

"Close the door. Keep it shut until I tell you to open it."

He gave these orders in an extremely loud voice. The operator looked frightened. Only one elevator—as was usually the case—was running.

"Yes," said the general with a smile, "I remember when you gentlemen correspondents were on my front. What did you think of my boys?"

"We thought they were splendid. Here, General, I'd like you to meet my wife, and Mrs. Smith and Mr. Smith. My wife is a Russian and Mr. and Mrs. Smith are Canadians."

"You Russian?" he asked Tamara.

"Of course," she replied, and asked him if he couldn't tell from her accent.

"You have no accent," he said, "but you're not Russian. You don't dress like one. You don't look like one."

People started ringing the bell on other floors for the elevator. The operator looked pleadingly at the general.

"Still," he shouted. "Don't you move. I want to talk to my friends."

The poor operator suffered in silence.

"So, you're Canadians? I always wanted to meet some Canadians."

Both Smiths could speak Russian. They answered him and I knew that they had always wanted to meet a Soviet general.

The elevator bell was ringing like a fire alarm.

The general lifted his stick.

"Move this elevator while I'm talking to my friends," he said, "and I'll crack you one."

His aide tried to calm the operator.

We continued our conversation. Pretty soon, the assistant manager of the hotel—breathless from running up one long flight of stairs—arrived outside the cage.

"Tovarich General," he pleaded, "Tovarich General. Won't you just move up to your floor? Other people want the elevator."

"The devil take them," said Yeremenko through the cage. "I'm talking to friends."

The hotel man was almost weeping. "Please, Tovarich General, just one little floor more."

"All right," snapped Yeremenko. I remembered him from the front as a good-natured man. Even filled with drink and surrounded by foreigners, he could be persuaded.

The elevator let us out at the next floor. The general got off with us, talking a blue streak.

"Look, Arnold," I said to my Canadian friend, "I'm going to call the people in 368 and ask them if we can't bring the general along."

Smith thought it an excellent idea and so did my host when I got him on the house telephone. I returned to General Yeremenko, Tamara, Eve and Arnold Smith, and the aide, who were standing in a group on the broad, dark, and depressing landing before the elevator. A hotel floor manager sat at a desk near by watching all this. As I joined the group, I saw her pick up the telephone.

We talked about Russia and Canada and the United States before I could get in a word about the dinner. In less than

two minutes I noticed a small man in a blue serge suit, wearing a black fur cap, walking up the staircase.

I can spot detectives anywhere. From a house dick in Dallas to the MVD in Moscow. The little man walked over and sat down in a chair near our group. As we were speaking entirely in Russian, he could understand everything. I tried to shift the group down the landing towards one of the wide dark hallways that are a particular feature of the Metropole. These are huge hallways, musty, and usually smelling of cabbage soup and fried fish. The general was hard to maneuver. He was enjoying this conversation and especially his give and take with the ladies.

"General Yeremenko," I broke in, "we are going to dinner. It would give us much pleasure if you and your aide could join us."

"Dinner?" he said. "Why, of course!"

The little man in the blue serge suit rose from his chair, walked up, and stood in front of the general.

"Tovarich General," said the little man, looking the bear-like Yeremenko straight in the eyes.

The general's expression changed. He was stunned. He wilted. The secret policeman had said only two words, "Tovarich General." It was the way he said them. A schoolteacher, sure of her discipline, emphasizing to a little boy that he was not to be naughty, with a slight threat in her voice.

General Yeremenko, commander of an entire front during the war and now headed for marshaldom, turned to me.

"I'm sorry," he said in a hollow tone. "It's impossible for me to have dinner with you."

"But, General," begged Eve, "you said you would."

Yeremenko turned, walked back to the elevator, and rang the bell.

The little man in the blue serge suit returned to his chair and sat down. The floor manager—who'd summoned the M.V.D. man from down in the lobby (two or three of these fellows usually can be found sitting around all big hotel lobbies)—looked up at the ceiling. The general's aide took me aside.

"I hope you understand," he whispered, and I always thought this was rather courageous of him, "the general is a Soviet commander. You are foreigners. I am very sorry."

He saluted us and joined his superior.

"Well, I'll be damned," said Eve.

We walked slowly down the corridor to the rooms of our host.

"There's no doubt in my mind who runs the Red Army," said Arnold.

"None in mine either," I added.

There are not many such cases in the Soviet Army, of course. Had I not just come from a cocktail party, I probably would not have started this conversation with Yeremenko. Had he not been drinking, he would not have continued it. Certainly not to the point of accepting an invitation to dine with foreigners in a hotel room. But, had the M.V.D. man not showed up, I'm sure the general and his aide would have dined with us. They would have had a wonderful time and it would have been a hell of an evening. But the little man appeared on the scene. Of course, if the general and his aide had gone to a foreigner's room, a waiter probably would have informed the floor manager and she would have called the cops and the cops would have come. The cops wouldn't have entered the foreigner's rooms, but a waiter would have

gotten some word to the aide and the aide would have received a signal from the policeman who'd have been outside in the corridor. And the general might have been led away in the middle of a meal. It's perhaps for the best that things worked out as they did.

People often ask me if the Russians would fight against us. Yes, I think they would. Not very willingly. All the officers and soldiers I ever talked to in Russia—and I can assure you there were plenty of them—always expressed friendship for the United States and much admiration for the American Army, Navy and Air Force. Some of them would argue the party line with me, but certainly those who met Americans in Germany and other places at the end of the war had nothing to say to me but friendly words.

As I knew them, the man who makes up the Soviet Army is not a belligerent, bloodthirsty man. He doesn't like war and he doesn't like being away from his wife, children, and relatives. He doesn't want to conquer any territory for the Communist regime. He wants to be left alone but—if the Soviet Government turns on the old propaganda machine and makes patriotism and issue of war, the Russian will fight again. And probably fight well.

I don't know what would have happened had Hitler used a better occupation policy in Russia. I know that when the Communist brass in the Kremlin, in the early days of the German invasion, screamed about the Fascist beast and Nazi ideology, the Russian soldiers were surrendering by the thousands on the western front. Hitler treated these soldiers as if they were animals, or subhumans. This got back to the Red Army. The party propaganda machine saw to that. And when Hitler reached the land-hungry Ukraine, did he abolish the detested collective farm system? No, he didn't. He kept

it in operation and the Ukrainians reasoned there wasn't much difference between Red Communist bosses and German bosses if they both used the collective farm system.

The people in the Kremlin did an abrupt about-face after those early months. The war became a war for the defense of the fatherland. Nothing was said about fighting for communism. It was a fight for Mother Russia. The old tsarist heroes were dug up and dusted off. The Order of Suvorov and the Order of Kutuzov were created. These ancient tsarist commanders were about as far removed from communism as was General Nathan Bedford Forrest, of the Confederate Army.

I believe the Kremlin could achieve a fair amount of success in getting the people to fight a patriotic war again. But probably not the success they had before, and if we ever went to war with them—God forbid—and we employed intelligent policies and propaganda, we might have some successes with the Soviet Army, too.

Not long before I left the U.S.S.R., a peasant woman in a village twenty-five miles from Moscow said to me one night, "Mr. Gilmore, in the last war your country helped us a lot. You gave us food and my children and I ate this food and we appreciated it. If we ever have a war with you, God of mine, I hate to think of it, you won't be giving us food. You'll be dropping bombs on us. We'll all die."

During the war years, I often marveled at the way the Russian soldier fought. His uniform was not a good one, but it was a thick, warm one. He didn't always have gloves, but his feet were nearly always warm because he wore a bandage-like sock in a leather boot. When it got very cold, he wore the traditional felt boot (*valinkie*) of his country and that is the warmest piece of footwear I ever put on. His

overcoat was good and he discarded the steel helmet in favor of his old fur cap. A wise choice. His main weapon was the standard Soviet rifle—not at all complicated. It would shoot straight and at a good distance. More automatic weapons were put in his hand as the years went by, but the rifle is still the basic weapon and the basic Red Army attack is still thousands of these peasant boys marching forward in great waves, the rifle in hand. When the first row gets shot down, the second row takes it place. And when it is mowed down, the third and fourth lines move up. They don't spare man power.

I have often said that everything in Russia is dear except human life. That is cheap. And the Army spends it. Ivan Ivanovich marching forward with the old Russian rifle in his hand. Getting shot down and not questioning it.

The Soviet Army believes that when it has a good weapon the best thing is to try to turn this weapon out in as large quantities as possible. It doesn't go in for many refinements.

The T-34 tank of the Red Army in the last war was a good sound tank. It didn't have all the fine gadgets that our tanks had. It took more physical strength to operate than did ours. But—a peasant boy can step off a collective farm tractor and drive a tank in less than a week. This is because the collective farm tractor and the T-34 tank are very much alike in operation.

The Soviet Air Force didn't have complicated fighter planes and bombers in the last war. They kept them simple and they did fairly well with them.

Their artillery was most basic. Very few new type cannon were introduced. They experimented with anti-tank weapons, found a good one, and kept making this same one.

The Russian commander of today believes in cannon as

the tsarist commander did. That it is the "mouth of war." He also learned to like the rocket as a weapon and the Katusha—(rocket-launching racks mounted on American Studebaker trucks)—was a most effective mechanism.

The Red Army machine gun hasn't changed in basic design in twenty years. It's still a good one. Easy to operate and hard to jam.

The Red Army learned much about ski warfare in the fight against the Finns. They use many ski troops in winter and they were deadly against the Germans.

At camouflage I know no one better than the Red Army. This, of course, is part of the Russian character. They love it and they do it well. One of their favorite tricks drew many a bomb from a German plane. They would hitch six or seven tanks—made out of wood or beaverboard—behind a horse-drawn sleigh and pull these dummies all over the front. A long rope extended from the first dummy tank to the sleigh, which was obviously fortunate for the Russian driving the sleigh. And the Luftwaffe would bang away and strafe the dummies and, no doubt, go back to base and report on the tanks they destroyed.

The Red Army had no post exchanges. The mail service to relatives was almost nonexistent. If a soldier got a letter from his wife inside of three or four months he was fortunate. For the wife to receive one at all was quite an event.

There were very few, if any, movies for the Soviet Army man, but occasionally stars from the Moscow, Leningrad, or Kiev theaters would makes visits to the front. In his leisure time—and there wasn't much of this—the Red Army man played chess or checkers. For outdoor amusement, he would kick a football or get up a volleyball game.

The political officers were constantly trying to get the boys

to study the flood of party literature and I suppose a lot of them did.

From what I could tell, Marshal Georgi Zhukov was the outstanding brain—and still is—in the Red Army. But even Zhukov had to know his place.

I sat beside him in Berlin once. He enthusiastically and graphically explained how the German capital was captured.

"I knew," he would say, "if I did this, the Germans were likely to do this."

With a pencil he marked the battle plan.

"So, I opened up here, held back this division, and when the time was ready, threw it in here. Do you understand?"

Zhukov has a blunt but bright face. His eyes are nice and he impressed me as the most intelligent commander I ever met in the U.S.S.R. I liked his personality and I thought him a man.

As he explained how he captured Berlin, I asked him one question.

"What did Marshal Stalin have to do with this?"

Zhukov's face became deadly serious. "Comrade Stalin," he answered, "directed my every move. I never made one single move that Comrade Stalin did not dictate. He did everything. All strategy was his. He is the greatest military genius who ever lived."

"Nuts," I wanted to tell him. "I don't believe that and you don't either."

Marshal Zhukov knew he better say what he said. As it was, I believe the reason he got sent to the wilderness after the war was that he became too popular with the Russian people and the Soviet Army. He might have been the man on horseback. He still may be.

It's my belief that Georgi Malenkov had to make a deal

with the armed forces to ever get L. P. Beria, the late chief of the secret police. That was an amazing achievement on Malenkov's part. The quick and deadly elimination of his closest rival. To bring this off, I believe he got in debt to the armed forces. He may have to pay that debt someday. And when the armed forces backed Malenkov against Beria, the armed forces—for the first time in a very long while—became stronger than the secret police. This, I think, has been one of the most important developments in the Soviet Union for many years.

How big is the Red Army? That is a military secret.

Solomon Lozovsky, when he was a Deputy Commissar of Foreign Affairs, once told me any nation was doing well to mobilize 10 per cent of its population into an army. That if it did 12 per cent it was doing mighty well. Twelve percent of Russian's two hundred million is twenty-four million. Quite an army.

27

The People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs telephoned every American and British correspondent one morning and said there would be a very important press conference at 4:00 P.M. Most of us had been invited to a British party at six-thirty and we reasoned that, no matter how important the conference might be, we'd be through in time for the other serious matter of the day.

About three-thirty there was another call from the Commissariat. The press conference had been postponed until six o'clock. More waiting, and it looked as if the social engagement was wiped out. At five-thirty still another call from

the Commissariat. Another postponement. The very important conference, and this time they stressed its importance, had been pushed back to 8:00 P.M.

Hurray, we could make the cocktail party, too! And we did.

While at the social party, we had yet another call from the Commissariat. The conference would positively be held at 9:00 P.M.

Our host, John Reed, second secretary at the British Embassy, urged us to stay on. And this we did, too. At eight o'clock the Commissariat checked in for the final time. The conference absolutely and positively would begin at 10:00 P.M.

It's a dangerous thing to invite correspondents to attend any press conference after they've been to a cocktail party. I imagine it would be dangerous to invite a group of plumbers to fix a sink after they'd been engaged in social drinking. Or a bunch of bankers to bank a bank. It's doubly dangerous to keep postponing the conference, for the newspapermen usually stay where they are. What's the point of moving? We stayed. Our host was bountiful. We enjoyed a great deal of his hospitality and were in excellent, though high, spirits when we moved off for the press conference.

Now, earlier in the day we had tried to get the press department to invite the single French correspondent in Moscow to this press conference, but the press chieftains said, "No. Only members of the Anglo-American Correspondents Association." We pleaded for Jean Champenois, but the press department would not budge. The conference was for bona fide members of the Anglo-American group and no one else. Or so we thought.

When we arrived at the press department, which was

located in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, we saw that Ralph Parker, now the Moscow correspondent of the *Daily Worker,* was waiting there, accompanied by a dark-haired Russian woman, his secretary-translator. The sight of someone who was not a member of the Anglo-American Correspondents Association caused the fiery-tempered Harold King, now Reuters' excellent chief of bureau in Paris, to blow up.

"This is an outrage," shouted King. (He'd been at Reed's party with us.) "This is a shocking outrage. A professional journalist, one of our colleagues, was barred from this conference and here we find, ah, other influences!"

King is not a big man, but he has a mighty voice. He bellowed as he walked up and down the big waiting room outside the offices of the chief of the press department. He was red of face and angry.

"A shame. A terrible shame. We shouldn't allow it."

It was perfectly obvious to Parker that King was objecting to the presence of his secretary.

"Are you referring to me, King?" asked Parker, who is about six feet tall and weighs around two hundred and twenty pounds.

"Yes," hissed Harold, "you and your——"

He went into a graphic description of Parker's secretary and what he thought of her, and more than inferred she was an informer for the secret police.

At this Parker walked across the room and hit King flush on his nose. I then sprang forward and grabbed Parker by the arm.

"If you want to fight," I suggested, "come fight someone your size."

I would never have been so brave, of course, had it not

been for John Reed's party, the long wait, and the absence of dinner, or even a sandwich.

"Of course, I won't fight you, Eddy," said Parker, and rightly so. "I have no argument with you."

While this was being said, Ronald Matthews, of the London *Daily Herald*—also a big man and one who did not regard Ralph Parker as one of his favorite people—reached over my shoulder and slugged the *Daily Worker* man a beautiful full clout on his nose. Off when Parker's glasses. In splinters. Blood streamed from his nose.

I was just as astonished as was Parker, for the blow had come from over my right shoulder.

Parker's secretary-translator must have had a poor view of Matthew's swinging right, for she jumped on my back and began to curse and claw me. I shook her off and I suppose I did it with some feeling because she flew across the room and banged into the glass panel of a door. The glass, quite naturally, shattered and came down with a great crash.

A door at the far end of the room opened.

"Gentlemen," said the chief censor, "Mr. Vyshinsky is ready to see the press."

Parker was battered and bleeding and, as he had no glasses, was unable to attend the conference. His secretary-translator went instead and reported it for him. King had recovered, but his nose was large and red. Matthews was still breathing heavily and obviously very anxious for Parker to join the issue with him. The secretary-translator had combed the glass out of her hair and halfway apologized to me.

With that as a beginner, we walked the short distance to Vyshinsky's office and received the news—and at great length—that the Soviet Union had severed relations with the Polish Government in Exile in London. At the time it was quite a

story and again the correspondents reported it. And accurately.

How times have changed. Should a foreign correspondent break a water glass in the press department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs today, I feel quite sure he would be called before the chief, lectured, and he might be asked to leave the country.

James Fleming, when he was the Moscow correspondent for the Columbia Broadcasting System, was asked to leave the U.S.S.R. He had an argument with a censor, tore up his censored telegram, and some of the bits of the paper fell in the censor's face.

Jim said wind from an open window blew the paper in the censor's eyes. The censor said Jim pitched it in his eyes. There were no other witnesses. Jim had to go. We appealed the decision to expell him, but got nowhere with it.

For staging such a pitched battle as we staged that night before Vyshinsky's press conference, all of us under today's conditions would have been summarily kicked out of the country. And correctly so, you may say.

But back in those days, the press department ignored the entire matter. Even my broken glass panel.

Moscow has always been a place which foreigners of all nationalities have used to do battle. I don't know exactly why this is.

A British subject of Irish origin once smashed up twenty-eight thousand rubles' worth of crockery and glassware in the big dining room of the Metropole Hotel.

An American sergeant cleaned up the gilt ballroom of the Grand Hotel. His master stroke was felling a fleeing waiter with a painted vase that must have weighed fifteen pounds. He led the waiter, as one does a flying duck, and the vase

crashed solidly upon his head as he reached the far corner of the ballroom and what he must have thought was sanctuary.

An Afghan named Abraham went berserk one night, kicked his girl friend in the stomach, beat up a policeman and several Russian civilians.

A tall young Frenchman, irritated because he was being followed on foot by a secret policeman as he took his girl home, waited around a corner for the M.V.D. man and when he hove into sight, knocked him cold with a blow on the mouth. He also knocked out several of the policeman's front teeth.

A British colonel and a King's Messenger were apprehended carrying a bronze statue of a nude Venus down the stairs at the Savoy Hotel in Moscow. Asked for an explanation, they replied they appreciated the statue as a work of art and were carrying it to the manager's office to see if he wouldn't sell it to them. In reporting the incident the following day, the newspaper *Afternoon Moscow* headlined the item tersely, "Artists."

An American sailor, attending a Christmas Eve party at Spasso House, attacked a tall pile of plates, with gold leaf decorations, and methodically smashed seven before one of his friends jumped him.

For five years in a row each Fourth of July picnic included at least one fight. As we were packing up to leave the sixth annual picnic, I said to one of my fellow countrymen, a short dark master sergeant from Providence, Rhode Island, "This is the first time I've ever been to a Fourth of July party in Moscow when there wasn't a fight."

He pointed across the room and replied with deep gravity,

"Stick around here about two minutes longer and you'll see me slug that son of a bitch." He did, too.

A State Department clerk, incensed at a Soviet colonel for bumping into his automobile and cursing him for not getting out of his way, knocked two side window glasses out of the Red Army man's car and then slugged the towering colonel.

At a Labor Day picnic, one of my fellow countrymen snatched the iron stake—at which we'd been pitching horseshoes—from the earth, hurled it at one of his housemates, and hit a piano player by mistake.

An American Army captain, angry with an American Army major, fired at him through a locked door with a .45-caliber automatic. The bullet went through the major's right leg, but hit no bone or artery.

An Italian diplomat saw a Russian breaking the glass window in his automobile one evening. He told the man to stop, which was certainly being diplomatic. When the Russian refused, the Italian walked around to his luggage compartment, took out a monkey wrench, and left the Soviet citizen lying senseless in the snow.

A Swedish engineer tossed a Metropole Hotel waiter into the goldfish pond in the center of the hostelry's dining room.

A young assistant army attaché from a Scandinavian nation tried to beat up his country's Minister at the fag end of a reception where the guests wore white ties and tails.

Believing she had been spurned by an American doctor (a bad translation was the real root of the trouble) a girl from a Central European nation once slashed her wrists and ran out of the old American Embassy into one of the capital's main streets, shouting "Murder" in her native tongue.

An American correspondent and a British correspondent teed off on one another during an argument over who was going to use the long-distance radio telephone.

Some called it "Moscow madness." I don't know what it was. I say Moscow brought out the worst AND the best in just about everybody.

28

There were three parties in 1944 that I shall never forget.

The first was Red Army Day. The Soviets were doing well on the front, and while the war was still hard and demanding many sacrifices on the part of the Russians, the tide had begun to turn in their favor. They were becoming confident after a period in which they acted as if they didn't know what was going to happen.

All the foreigners in Moscow wanted to get to the reception the Red Army gave that year. When my invitation arrived, I was pleased to see that the chief of staff had invited Mrs. Gilmore as well as Mr. Gilmore. I called Major Waldron and he said his invitation also included Tanya, his Russian wife.

The girls cleaned our uniforms as best they could (no clothes-cleaning establishment operated in Moscow until the last year of the war) pressed them for the great occasion, and put on their best dresses.

The invitations read white tie and tails and dress uniform with medals. I had no dress uniform. Only a war correspondent's military jacket, trousers, shirt, and cap. And certainly no medals.

During the war, the custom in many nations was to abandon for the duration tuxedos and certain tails. But not the Russians. They remained as formal as ever.

John Waldron, his wife, Tamara and I arrived at Speridonovka Palace—for that's where the reception was being held—only a few minutes late. The girls looked lovely and we felt very proud of them.

Red Army officers and officers from the security police ushered our jeep into the spacious grounds of the palace and right up to the door. I helped the girls out while John parked our machine. We lost a little face by not having a chauffeur, but at least the people inside the palace didn't know about our disgrace.

This was a glittering reception. I had been in the building before and I knew the first floor of the palace consisted of four rooms in which the guests were received, and six rooms in which they later did their eating and drinking. I have reversed the order. I should say drinking and eating.

I never saw so many marshals and generals assembled under one roof, and it was not difficult to recognize many of them. Klementy Voroshilov, Semyon Budenny, with his long black mustaches; Voronov, the artillery chieftain, and so many others. A large representation from the Politburo—the most powerful group of men in the Soviet Union, the political bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist party. On hand for the occasion, Molotov, Kaganovich, Mikoyan, Voznesensky, Khrushchev, and Shvernik.

The Politburo members migrated to a rear room where a long table had been set up, laden with food and drink. Averell Harriman was the American Ambassador and he was escorted into this room.

I brushed past a secret policeman—(they were everywhere

that night)—and entered the room. Harriman, a very handsome man, had the seat of guest of honor at the Politburo table. It was his first experience with vodka drinking and he learned a lesson he never forgot.

"Tovarichi," said Molotov, rising from his seat, "I ask you to drink to the United States."

The Commissar of Foreign Affairs turned to Harriman and clicked glasses with him. Harriman sipped at the liquid in his full glass.

"Oh, no," said Molotov, "you must drink bottoms up. You do not drink the toast in sincerity unless you do."

All this was through a translator.

What was the new American Ambassador to do but bottoms up? The Foreign Commissar had offered a toast to the U.S.A. The least the Ambassador could do was to "drink the toast in sincerity."

I shook my head as I watched. I knew what was going to happen.

Molotov sat down and stared at Harriman. The translator said something to the Ambassador, who was still gasping from what I'm sure was his first straight glass of vodka down in one gulp. Bravely, he got to his feet.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I propose a toast to the Soviet Union, the ally of the United States in this war."

Again he tried to sip from the glass.

"No, no," said Mikoyan. "You must drink to the bottom. You surely mean the toast seriously."

I couldn't bear to watch this and I left the room for a while. When I returned, several more toasts had been done bottoms up.

The Politburo table was very gay. The American Ambassador was still playing the game.

"I propose the health of President Roosevelt," said Kaganovich, getting to his feet and walking over to Harriman.

The poor Ambassador stood up once more and again he knocked the vodka back straight and to the bottom. I looked down the table. While Kaganovich, the man who proposed the toast, drank bottoms up with Harriman, none of the rest did. The Ambassador didn't see this though. That, of course, was the trick. That is a famous one. The guest, such as Harriman was, cannot refuse to drink toasts, and while he presumes that everyone else is putting them back bottoms up, this, of course, is not the case. In other words, Harriman was drinking about six glasses of vodka to every one of the Politburo's. Manfully, he kept the pace.

I saw a secretary from the Embassy.

"You better tell the Ambassador to start putting soda, instead of vodka, in his glass." That is the way, as many a foreigner learned, to play this toasting game.

The secretary studied his chief.

"I'm afraid," he said, "it's too late."

I left the room again and wandered around with Tamara, greeting and talking to Russians. All the Moscow great were here this evening. The leading ballerinas, the finest of the actors and actresses from the Moscow Art Theatre. The cream of the opera. Writers, painters, poets. Tamara introduced me to the widow of the great writer, Anton Chekov. She was still doing roles at the Art Theatre. And doing them well. I met Levanov, to me one of the world's greatest actors. To see him in Gogol's *Dead Souls* is a memorable thing.

I laughed and joked with Dimitri Shostakovich. Especially when he told me that the great thrill in life for him was not finishing a new symphony, or having one acclaimed by the

people and the critics, but "that first swallow of beer after my favorite football team has won a hard victory."

The sensitive, intelligent Shostakovich was an avid football fan and a nice man to talk to.

With Tamara, I talked to Serge Prokofiev, who was to die of a broken heart, oddly the same night they said Stalin died. In my book, Prokofiev towered above the other modern Soviet composers. He, alone, did not recant after the Central Committee of the Party denounced him for "formalism" in his music and other high idealistic crimes.

I danced with Olga Lepeshinskaya, one of the country's four best ballerinas and a person who can be charming when she wants to. The band of the evening was some oompah outfit with tubas and such from the Army. Not much dancing possible. Even with the talented Olga.

Ilya Ehrenburg, the journalist, was the center of much attention, and every time I saw him he had little groups of admirers around him. I have never cared for this man. He is intelligent, a splendid writer, and a man who certainly knows the score. He is completely dishonest intellectually and sings for supper any tune his Communist bosses throw him. His cynical comments on the American way of life—after he visited this country in 1946—are among the worst pieces of writing I have ever seen in any language. I always gave Ilya a wide berth.

At one in the morning, I returned to the Politburo room. The American Ambassador was looking, let us say, very tired. Who wouldn't? He must have downed at least fifteen or twenty glasses of straight vodka. I thought of Charles Laughton as King Henry VIII. How he sighed at the rear view of one of his wives and commented, "The things I do for England."

The things Averell Harriman was having to do for the U.S.A. that evening. At 2:00 A.M., three of us escorted the American Ambassador to his automobile and tucked him in with a bear rug. He'd done well.

I returned to the large dining room, found Tamara, and was about to go off to talk to someone when Marshal Voroshilov grabbed me by the arm.

"A toast," he said.

"Of course, Marshal Voroshilov."

"Come, come," he motioned Tamara, "you are a real Russian girl. You must drink too."

We did.

Marshal Budenny arrived on the scene.

"You Russian?" he asked Tamara.

"Of course."

"You look just like an American girl."

There was a pretty woman in a white evening dress standing beside the marshal. She must have been about thirty.

"American girl?" she asked. "Where did you ever know an American girl?"

"In the movies," laughed Budenny. "Please, I introduce my wife."

Kaganovich walked up, as did the Waldrons. The last I remember about that party was that I had one arm around Tamara and the other around Klementy Voroshilov, now the Chairman of the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet, and as unapproachable as the crown jewels of the late Tsar. Voroshilov had an arm around me, too, and congratulated me on my taste in women.

"A toast to the women of Russia. The very best women in the world," said Marshal Budenny.

I drank it. To the bottom.

Alexandrov, the famed leader of the Red Army chorus, joined us.

"We must have a song," he beamed. He motioned to the military band in the gallery. I don't know what it was they played but we sang and sang and sang. It was certainly the only time in my life that members of the Politburo got buddy-buddy with me.

I remember most vividly that, at one point, somebody proposed a toast to Stalin as we stood there, swaying and singing in the middle of the room. I recall how the expressions changed on the faces of these men. How all the laughter stopped and how each one tried to outshout the other as he lifted his glass to the "leader and teacher, wisest genius in the world."

The next memorable party of the year took place in the apartment of a beautiful young Russian who was in the movies. Her name was Ludmilla. She sang sad songs and there was a scruffy Russian man along who could twist some glorious chords from the neck of a mellow guitar as he accompanied her.

I sat there listening as if I were stunned. She certainly could sing. Tamara was beside me on a low, lumpy divan and Lieutenant Colonel Ted Croft and Major Hugh Lunghi, of the British Military Mission, and Captain Eddie Yorke, of the American naval attaché office, were somewhere in the room. Candles were burning because the electricity was turned off all over Moscow that night. As everyone knows, women never look more beautiful than under candlelight. Four or five other Russian girls were present. As far as I was concerned, all of them could have been movie stars.

At an intimate Russian party, no one talks when there is singing. But who could have talked that night, the way

Ludmilla was singing? It was so soft, so low. Sad wind off the old Russian steppe. The deep and unhurried Volga. White Russia's dark and silent swamps.

"Tatiana," she sang, "the cold of a starry night and your hot hands . . ."

Tamara squeezed my arm. I looked into her big brown eyes and asked myself a question that I've repeated, I suppose, a million times: How did anything this wonderful ever happen to me?

"I neu you would luf her," said Tamara.

"I know I love you," I told her.

"But, Ludmilla, is she not some woman?"

"She certainly is. Some woman and some singer."

This was between tunes. Ludmilla got up and fetched another bottle of champagne, pinched a candle or two, pushed up the sleeves on her long white arms, lay back in her chair, and closed her eyes. The guitar player gently stroked a low minor chord. How much this sad Gypsy music was like the Negro blues of the Southland.

Boy meets girl to be sure. And boy leaves girl. Or girl leaves boy. The sudden panic of loneliness in a lush blue note.

I shut my eyes and put my arm around Tamara and my sound thoughts went back to nights of childhood in the Deep South when I used to slip away from home in the black dark and carry Joe Billop's bass fiddle as he and three other Negroes went from lawn to lawn "serenading" the white folks on their big verandas on the hot summer nights. Of listening to the incomparable Bessie Smith sing "Empty Bed Blues," in a joint on Decatur Street, in Atlanta. Of Bill Davison spilling his heart through the broad open mouth of his cornet in "When Your Lover Has Gone." Jack Teagarden's

unforgettable "Stars Fell on Alabama." Ralph Sutton playing Bix's delicate "In A Mist."

Ludmilla finished on a note that hung in the room for a moment and then curled up in the corner.

The tall dignified British officer, Ted Croft, got to his feet. I saw there were tears in his eyes.

"I say, that's absolutely first class!"

He took Ludmilla by one hand. She stood up, laughed, and kissed him on the tip of his nose.

"Little dove," she said in Russian. "My tall little dove. You cry."

"Absolutely magnificent," said Ted in the horrible confusion that only an Englishman gets into when he's caught out showing his emotions, raw and unchecked.

We ate *bleni* and caviar at four o'clock in the morning, gay and sentimental around a big wooden table, and then we piled into one automobile and rode out to the towering Lenin Hills to watch Moscow light up in the dawn. The first rays of sunrise on the golden domes of the Kremlin down the green Moskva River from where we stood. Over to the left, the tall bell tower of the Cathedral of the Young Maidens, glittering straight and red in the opaque morning. The dawn after a Moscow party. A party at which nothing in particular happened. Yet one I shall always remember.

The third great party of that year took place on November 7 and it was featured by Mr. Molotov, the Foreign Minister, absorbing huge lashings of vodka and yet keeping the party line until he lurched his slow way to his automobile at an hour when everyone—including foreign ministers—should be in bed.

Again the reception took place in Speridonovka Palace and once more the Politburo assembled with the American

and British ambassadors in the back room. This evening it was the turn of His Majesty's envoy to get on the vodka merry-go-round. Harriman stayed on the course and drank soda unless compelled to bottoms up in vodka. But they got Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, and one time when he rose to deliver what, I am sure, would have been a fine toast, he had to brace himself with both hands, palms down on the table.

"Gentlemen," Sir Archibald began, but he got no further, for his hands slipped from beneath him and he pitched into a pile of plates on the table. Mr. Molotov and others lifted him out. The Ambassador looked around and, with measured dignity, brushed himself off and finished his toast. A creditable comeback.

But, Sir Archibald was not the real feature of the party. This was to come later.

Molotov, already well loaded, started around the palace on a tour of toast drinking. Three waiters followed in his wake, bearing trays on which various bottles and glasses were arranged.

The Foreign Minister encountered the representative of Canada.

"I would like to drink a toast," said Molotov, "to everlasting friendship between the great people of Canada and the great Russian people."

The toast was drunk and I noticed the Swedish Minister standing close by. If Molotov noticed him, he paid him no attention, for he turned on his heel and walked over to the Norwegian Ambassador.

"And now," said Molotov, "I would like to drink a toast to everlasting friendship between the great Norwegian people and the great Russian people."

They drank this one and again the Swedish Minister stood

by, as if to make a tackle. But Molotov ignored him. He walked to another group and the envoy from Sweden followed, as did a number of other persons. The center of this new group was an American naval commander, freshly arrived in Moscow. Molotov spotted him.

"You!" he bellowed. "You!"

The navy man halted.

"Me?" he asked in great surprise.

"Yes, you," said Molotov. "Fill your glass."

A big crowd gathered around them. Andrei Vyshinsky, the Deputy Foreign Minister, was one of them.

"I want to drink a toast to the everlasting friendship between the truly great American people and the Russian people," said Molotov.

The startled commander drank bottoms up with the Foreign Minister.

Here, the Swedish Minister moved in and stood in front of Molotov.

"And I," said the envoy from Stockholm, "would like to drink a toast to everlasting friendship between the great Russian people and the great Swedish people."

Molotov looked him coldly in the eye. Sweden, of course, was neutral in World War II, as she was in World War I.

"The great Swedish people," said Molotov, "are just a little too neutral."

The poor Minister. He looked as if a bomb had hit him on the head.

Molotov walked away and drank a toast with someone else. The Chinese Ambassador, I believe.

Crestfallen, the Swedish envoy left the room and went home.

Those who saw the incident were shocked. They hurried

off into corners, whispering about it in high excitement.

Molotov had echoed the party line. Granted he echoed it in thunderous tones and in hardly diplomatic language, but that was the Soviet position. They wanted Sweden in the war. When she wasn't, she was "just a little too neutral."

The Foreign Minister was in very high spirits and he began to wobble as he walked about with his wine bearers. Vyshinsky remained as close to him as he dared.

In hushed sentences, Vyshinsky tried to get his Foreign Minister to go home. Like many another man who has a load on, Molotov wanted to stay on at the party. It was his party, wasn't it? Vyshinsky might have been worrying about the way the Swedish Minister had been treated, but not Mr. Molotov. Vyshinsky began to plead with his boss. Finally, Molotov gave in and started down the broad stairway. Vyshinsky remained at his side. A flunky rushed forward with the Foreign Minister's fur-trimmed coat. Molotov turned and looked up the stairway. He sighted the American naval commander. Pushing away the servant with the coat, he turned and mounted the stairs, Vyshinsky following close behind, urging him to go get in his car.

"Nyet," said Molotov. *"Nyet."*

He reached the top of the stairs and, walking up to the commander, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

"My great friend," he beamed.

Vyshinsky's hands hovered over the broad shoulders of his boss. You could see he was itching to grab him and hustle him out of the place. But grabbing a Foreign Minister is a little ticklish anywhere and, in Soviet Russia, it's unthinkable. Instead, he pleaded and pleaded and pleaded. It was the first time I'd ever seen a Deputy Foreign Minister trying to get a Foreign Minister to go home. And, I'm sure, the cold,

hard Molotov has never felt more kindly to an American than he did that night. The commander must be the only citizen of the United States that Molotov ever kissed. And on the lips, too.

The Swedish Minister?

Oh, yes. In only a few days he left the city very hurriedly. The Soviets told the Swedish Government that he was persona non grata. That they didn't want him in Moscow any longer. What was the charge against him? Not that it matters, but they said something about his spying for the Germans.

That, of course, was too bad. I knew this man and he was a gentleman and, I had always heard, a good diplomat. He just made the mistake of trying to force Mr. Molotov into a political position that the Foreign Minister didn't want to be forced into.

29

A lot of things were lacking in Moscow that winter of 1944–45 and one of them, we decided, was American jazz.

"George played the guitar in a college band," said Mrs. George F. Kennan one night. "You played, and I'm sure two or three others around here did. Let's get up a band."

Kennan, a brilliant State Department career officer, was then Minister-Counselor of the United States Embassy. He returned to Russia in 1952 as Ambassador and served his country honorably and excellently until the Soviets ruled him persona non grata, which is a diplomatic way of saying we don't want you any more. But back in 1944, George was the guitar player in the first American band in Russia.

We practiced in his apartment, to the great dismay of the Finnish Minister, Cay Sundstrem, who lived in the flat below. Mrs. Kennan served the drinks and the food and organized all of our sessions.

Our band was called "The Kremlin Krows," after the thick swarms of black squawkers that wheel over the Kremlin at sundown every winter evening. We felt there was something in our music that sounded like the crows.

Two sergeants, clerks in the military attaché's office, were the mainstay of the band. Both were professional musicians in civilian life and made their living by playing in orchestras in the U.S.A. The rest of us had either played in college bands or had courage enough to perform in faraway Russia. We had a lot of fun.

One evening, long after Kennan had returned to the States, we were asked to play at the Egyptian Legation. Inasmuch as we refused any compensation and always performed for free, we were in great demand. If any embassy didn't get us, they had to pay a Soviet group of musicians anywhere from five hundred to a thousand dollars. Our widespread popularity is easily understandable. This night the diplomats from the Nile were beaming on The Kremlin Krows.

A number of officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were present, including Andrei Vyshinsky, Jacob Malik, and the then chief of protocol, F. F. Molochkov, a thin blond young man with stomach ulcers and an uncertain disposition. This particular evening Mr. Vyshinsky was late, and as it was a buffet supper, the guests just stood around drinking cocktails and listening to The Kremlin Krows until the great man arrived. Along about ten o'clock, Vyshinsky entered the room, looking, as I always thought he looked, like an old gray rat, with his sinister smile and his rodent-like teeth.

The Egyptian Minister, Bindari Pasha, heaved a sigh of relief, shook hands warmly, and after a decent interval, invited Vyshinsky into the dining room to have something to eat. An Egyptian first secretary officially extended an invitation to Malik and something must have gone wrong, for Mr. Molochkov was left to fend for himself.

Soviet officials can be terribly formal. Molochkov was no exception. Haughtily, he gazed around the room and saw that no one from the Egyptian Legation was going to officially invite him to have dinner. I saw him frown and take an extra-long draw from his cigarette. Then his eyes settled on me. I was the nearest, and certainly the biggest, target, although I definitely was no Egyptian.

"Mr. Gilmore," said the slighted chief of protocol, pointing to the bass drum, "just what does that mean?"

I looked at the drum. It was the same old picture that we used for a long time—a black silhouette of the Spasski Tower at the Kremlin and lots of crows flitting around it. The big printed letters "The Kremlin Krows," I thought, should have told the story.

I went into an explanation and, sensing that Molochkov was irritated about something, did it very carefully. I told him we were but amateur musicians and likened the noises we made to those emitted by the crows over the Kremlin.

The chief of protocol frowned again.

"I'm not sure," he said very solemnly, "that this shows proper respect for our government."

He studied the bass drum for at least a minute.

"No, Mr. Gilmore. You are showing disrespect."

The Pasha arrived on the scene.

"My dear Mr. Molochkov," he said in French, "do excuse me. Through some stupidity, we neglected to invite you to

dinner. Won't you do me the honor to come have some food?"

Molochkov glared at him.

"Thank you," he said. "I am not hungry."

His eyes returned to the drum.

"Mr. Molochkov," I said, "you can't be serious about this. We certainly and definitely mean no disrespect to the Kremlin."

"I am not sure," he replied, and there was ice in his voice.

The rebuffed Minister tried again to get Molochkov to come and have supper and when the slighted official—who was now really feeling sorry for himself—once more refused, the Pasha could only retire with more profuse apologies.

I left Molochkov still staring at the drum. I wanted to find Tamara because I knew she and the chief of protocol liked one another and Tamara had a way with him, as she has with most men. I found her at last. She was seated at a big table, the dinner partner of Jacob Malik. Their conversation was most animated. Reluctantly, I interrupted them and asked Malik to pardon me while I led my wife from the table. I explained the situation to her.

"Get him to eat," I said, "and maybe he won't shoot The Kremlin Krows down in diplomatic flames."

I don't know what she said, but pretty soon Tamara entered the crowded dining room on the arm of F. F. Molochkov, filled his plate, and sat him at the table with Malik. This was in the days before Malik came to the United States, and as his country's representative on the Security Council, spent many of his days in thunderous denunciation of America. That night he was laughing, full of jokes, and thoroughly charming. He is a highly educated Russian, a splendid conversationalist, and can be good fun at a party.

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"Comrade Molochkov," he asked, "what's the matter? Are you sick?"

The diplomat was still smarting from what he thought was a serious breach of protocol on the part of the Egyptians.

"It's my stomach," he said, "it's not well."

"Then put some vodka in it," suggested Malik.

Molochkov held up his hand.

"I would like some fruit juice," he said.

I felt The Kremlin Krows might be doomed. And they were, too, for in just a few days the Ambassador gave an order to have the painting of the Kremlin and Krows eliminated from the band's bass drum. I wrote a story about this entire incident, sent it in to the censor, and waited. I waited for twenty-four hours and then it was returned to me. My story had begun:

"Moscow, March 6—(AP)*—The Kremlin Krows—the only American jazz band in Russia—were in full flight today trying to get away from a purging paintbrush."*

What the censor left of that was:

"Moscow, March 6—(AP)*—The Krows were in full flight today."*

There wasn't much point in dispatching a story to the U.S.A. that began like that. I didn't send it, but as soon as I got a chance, I went to work on the drum's exposed skin. Our beautiful picture of the Kremlin and its black birds was washed off with kerosene and in its place we printed the word "Censored" and below that, "The Purged Pigeons." For at least a year, we were known as "The Purged Pigeons," but as the older group of diplomats began finishing out their Moscow tours of duty and new ones arrived to take their places, we had to go into long explanations of our new name.

Finally, I got tired of explaining. I found the kerosene

again and once more I tackled the bass drum, erasing our new name, "The Purged Pigeons."

In its place, with the able assistance of Harry (Red) Sedgely, now a vice-consul in Bombay, I painted:

"Joe Commode and His Four Flushers."

Oddly, from that time on, no one ever asked me for an explanation of the band's name. Americans often smiled, and one or two broke out laughing when they saw it for the first time, but this beat doing that lengthy explanation several times during a diplomatic dance. I should add, however, that at least several wives of newly arrived European and South American diplomats often addressed me seriously as "Monsieur Commode," as they asked me to play some tune.

In one form or another, Joe Commode and His Four Flushers existed until the day I left Moscow. We really jumped when Edward Freers played piano and Colonel Gary Schuman slapped the bass. We officially disbanded the last night Tamara and I spent in Moscow—a wonderful farewell party for us given by our dear friends, the chargé d'affaires of Pakistan, Sikhu Baig, and his lovely wife, Taj.

After I left Joe Commode would be down to three pieces. Peter, a Scot from the British Embassy, on piano, and the incomparable Elio Pascerelli, a Neapolitan, who was as full of music as the Bay of Naples is of water. His title was second secretary of the Italian Embassy. I don't know how he was at diplomacy, but he was sensational on the accordion.

In the soft dawn of a Moscow summer morning, three hours before a plane took Tamara, our two children, and me to the western side of the iron curtain, while the party was still on, I broke up the band.

As I was the only remaining member of the original Kremlin Krows, I felt I had the right.

General Lucius Clay had sent me my drum from Berlin. Eddie Condon had dispatched me my wire brushes from New York. Teresa Ford had purchased my drumsticks on a mission to Stockholm. I gave them all away at 4:00 A.M. Rather sentimentally, I believe, for making American jazz in Russia did something important for me.

When people used to ask me, "How are you able to stand it over here year after year? How are you able to keep sane, not knowing if you'll ever get your wife and children out?" I would always smile, beat out a riff, and reply, "By playing the drums. Russia occupies one sixth of the earth's surface. I am the best American jazz drummer in all that territory, for I am the only one."

30

The young colonel steered me into a relatively quiet corner of a Moscow military party. He looked behind us to make sure he couldn't be overheard.

"I've got to tell someone about this," he said, in a low confidential voice, "because, Army or not, it worries me. It's on my conscience."

"What have you done," I asked in mock seriousness, "given the Germans our top secret?"

"Not I," he replied, "and not to the Germans."

His green eyes swept the room again.

"Now, you can't quote me," he whispered, "but I stood by today when we gave the Soviets the Norden bombsight."

I was vaguely aware that the United States had something called the Norden bombsight, which, I'd heard, enabled our

air force bombers to achieve very successful results in hitting difficult targets.

"Colonel," I replied, "they are our allies now and I believe it's the policy of our government to do everything possible to convince Stalin of our sincerity. Hell, man, we're giving them everything."

"I'm a Southern Democrat," said the colonel, "and I suppose we've always been Democrats, but I'm damned if I believe we ought to give these people something like the bombsight. Something they'll use on us someday."

I asked him what he thought I should do with the information he'd just given me.

"Write a story about it," he said. "The American people ought to know about what happened on this day."

"I'm afraid the censor won't pass it, and if he does, you'll catch hell."

"Not if you don't tell who gave you the information," he replied.

"You're sure about this?"

"Absolutely. I was in the room when they did it."

I hesitated.

"You mean we gave them the Norden bombsight on instructions from Washington?"

"Of course," he said. "I'm sure no one I know over here would do that on his own."

"And if the censor won't pass the story?"

"Then you'll know about it and you can write about it someday."

"Thank you," I told him.

I wrote the story and the censor, of course, killed it.

I wish I could say that I agreed completely with the young colonel that day, but I can't. I had a feeling, as did so many

Americans, that this was an all-out war and that, as a true ally, we should co-operate very closely. I did have one reservation, though. I knew the Russians were not co-operating fully with us. Far from it. I thought we should get more out of them.

That wasn't the last I saw of the young colonel. I was in his company the night I came the closest to getting killed in World War II. I'm not trying to say that I lived in danger—that I underwent great risks. For I didn't. But, nevertheless, I almost got mine one night.

The young colonel was one of a large group of American officers who came to the Soviet Union to work out the establishment of three United States air bases on the territory of the U.S.S.R. Since I have returned to America, I find this phase of the last war something that the people over here know very little about. On the highest level possible, an agreement had been concluded whereby three bases would be set up in the Ukraine. American airmen would man them with the co-operation of the Soviet Air Force. Our bombers based in Italy were to bomb Rumania and then, instead of turning and making the long flight back to Italy, would fly straight on to their bases in the Soviet Union. There they would refuel and reload and give the Rumanian oil fields and other targets another bombing as they returned to their Italian bases. Planes of the Eighth Air Force based in England would bomb German targets in Poland and light on the Ukrainian bases. This operation was called "shuttle bombing," and it took a great deal of extremely hard work and negotiation to get Stalin to agree. But he did, and the bases went into operation with several thousand American airmen living and working at the three bases, the largest one at Poltava, and two others some fifteen or twenty miles west-

ward towards the front. Our people had tried to persuade the Soviets to allow the bases to be built closer to the front, but the Russians wouldn't agree.

The American and British correspondents in Moscow were taken down to Poltava to watch the first flight of bombers arrive from a Rumanian bombing mission. A terrible row resulted between the correspondents and the Soviet press department, for the Russians wanted only agency correspondents and one or two special ones to make the trip. Every correspondent naturally wanted to go. After what amounted to a sit-down strike on the part of the correspondents, the Soviets agreed and everyone who wanted to flew off to Poltava.

We saw the big bombers arrive, met the crews, sat in on the gatherings that questioned them about the results of the raid. How pleasant it was to be back with one's own people. To have them trust you (as the Russians never did). To brief you on what was going on. I made a lot of good friends down there at Poltava, many of whom I have seen since. Some of them were killed during the war and I've been in touch with at least two of their widows. Others have gone back into civilian life and some have gone on to great things in the American Air Force. It must have been a hand-picked bunch, for they were certainly splendid men and soldiers. But this isn't getting me up to the point of reporting what must have been the greatest disaster suffered by the American Air Force on the ground since Pearl Harbor. I think I went down to Poltava four or five times before the night of the big Luftwaffe raid. In any case, I had enough good friends down there so that I didn't have to sleep on an old Russian railway sleeping car that had been provided as a billet for the correspondents who, on this trip, included a number of Soviet

newspapermen. David Nichols, of the Chicago *Daily News*, a very keen reporter, and Bill White, the talented son of the late William Allen White, accepted an invitation of the Medical Corps to bunk with the doctors.

The hospital and medical quarters at Poltava were separated from the rest of the camp, but they were fairly close to the big landing field, with its metal strips that American engineers had lain across the Ukrainian mud. Too close, I should add.

Late one afternoon we watched between eighty and ninety of our biggest bombers fly in from a raid over targets in Poland. Again we sat in on the reporting to intelligence officers. The Soviet correspondents were invited to this too. Something, I feel sure, their own Air Force never permitted them to do.

When all the reports were in, I went off with one of the members of the small air photographic unit attached to the big Poltava base. Unfortunately, I have forgotten his name and I can't find it in my notes, but I remember he looked like a young edition of Clark Gable and he was very good company. We were lying on cots with three or four others of the unit when we heard the high-pitched, faint whine of an airplane motor high overhead.

My friend stopped talking and quickly, but quietly, slid off his cot, and hurried out of the tent. The others followed him. They looked at the plane high overhead. Then they looked at one another for an instant and began running for their planes. As they took off, leaving me standing in a dust storm, I saw the high-flying plane was already heading away to the west. I had been associated with the war long enough to suspect that this was a German reconnaissance ship. When my friends returned to their tents, where I'd gone to wait for

them, they told how they chased the German a long way, but he outdistanced them. He had too much of a start (and too fast a plane, I reasoned).

"I'm afraid," said the young Clark Gable, "that this means trouble."

"How?" I asked.

"Oh, he's photographed us. Photographed all those bombers sitting on the field. We may be in for it."

"Have you told the ground defenses about this?" I asked.

The fellows laughed.

"The Russkis are our ground defense," said one of them. "And you ought to see them. No radar. No night fighters. Just old-fashioned listening devices."

"The same sort of listening devices they put in your rooms in Moscow, I imagine," said one of the young officers.

We all laughed.

"Do our people down here know about this German plane?" I asked.

"Oh, sure. We talked to them when we came back. But what can they do?"

I thought about this for a while and then walked over to the quarters of one of the ranking American officers at the Poltava base. He readily saw me and I talked about the recent happenings. He told me that what I'd heard was true. That the American command had begged the Soviets to let us set up our own defenses in the Ukraine, but our people couldn't get Stalin's consent and that we were, so to speak, in the hands of the Soviets.

"They've got some good anti-aircraft guns," said the general, "but little else. However, let's hope for the best." He dismissed the subject and poured me a drink.

Back at the medical section, I found Bill White and told

him my news. Neither of us worried particularly about it and it certainly was with light heart that I went to bed that night. David Nichols and I had accepted the invitation of the medical men and chosen an empty hospital tent to live in and Bill White used the bed of some officer who had gone to Teheran for something. My hospital bed was very comfortable. Much better than one of those bunks in the Russian railway car where the other correspondents were staying.

We had a tasty American dinner with the doctors and four American nurses and tossed off several highballs made of Iranian vodka and canned grapefruit juice just before going to bed. David and I said good night to one another and I turned on my side to sleep the sleep of the not too greatly disturbed when I was startled by a loud clanging.

"What in the name of God is that?" I asked.

The beating got louder and faster. Dave and I slipped our feet into our shoes and walked outside the tent.

"That's the air-raid alarm," one of the doctors shouted at us. "We don't have shelters down here, but we got some slit trenches just beyond the mess tent. You'd better go on down there."

I looked at Nichols. I could see his face in the half-dark of 10:00 P.M. on an early summer Ukrainian evening. He didn't look troubled. I didn't feel troubled. We walked back into our hospital tent.

"I never went into an air-raid shelter in London during a blitz," I said, "and I see no point in doing it down here."

"Agreed," said David.

We went back to bed.

In clashes and bangs, the air-raid alarm echoed over the Poltava plains.

"I don't hear any planes," I said.

"I suppose they are over one of the advance bases," said David, "or maybe it's just a false alarm."

We tried to sleep. They stopped beating on the air-raid alarm, which I remembered was made of a truck's steel tire ring, suspended from a sort of gallows. I heard the drone of airplane motors off in the distance. They got closer and closer and the next thing I knew, several bombs hit near us. They sounded like giant firecrackers. The noise was more of a sharp crack than a dull boom. I turned on my flashlight.

"That was pretty close," said David.

The sound of men running came to us from outside the hospital tent.

"Oh, well," I said, trying to be as casual as possible, "maybe we better mosey on down to those slit trenches and see what's going on."

David agreed. We put on our clothes and, armed with a flashlight, walked the hundred yards to the mess tent. Someone recognized us.

"Over here, Eddy," shouted a voice I knew.

About that time a dozen bombs hit near us. I required no more coaxing. I found the slit trench in no time at all and stumbled over a nurse.

"I'm sorry," I said, "but I had a few bombs up there."

"What the hell do you think I've got down here," asked the nurse, "a duck?"

A shout of laughter went up from one end of the trench to the other.

I was kneeling beside the nurse.

"I would ask you to lie on me," she said, "but one gentleman has already volunteered for that job."

I heard her sigh. Wherever she is today, God bless her for her lusty gaiety that night.

Another stick of bombs exploding very close by sent me scrambling to my stomach in that open ditch. I lay there face down, next to, but not on, the nurse. I remember how wide the slit trench all of a sudden seemed to become. And how utterly coverless. The bombs were pouring down now. The earth trembled. There was a tremendous explosion and a blast of warm air curled around my face down there in my hide-out. I couldn't resist turning my head and looking up at the sky. It was full of "chandeliers"—those lights that the German bombers dumped out of their planes to illuminate their targets. They lit up the heavens and made the Poltava shuttle-bombing base almost as light as daylight. I peeped out of the trench. Whole acres seemed to be ablaze. The frightening whistle of a bomb cut through the night. I dropped to my stomach in the dirt again. No more bombs came down. I waited and waited. Still no bombs. The light from the fires the bombs had started made everything bright around us. I saw Bill White standing near me.

"That Persian vodka," I asked, "didn't we leave a few bottles in your tent?"

"We certainly did," said Bill.

"Then let's go get them."

Nichols joined us as we ran for the tent. A surprise awaited us. There was a big smoking hole in the tent where Bill had been sleeping. We rushed inside with our flashlights.

"Look at my cap," moaned Bill, "and my jacket."

"Nuts to them," said David. "Where is the vodka?"

"They are shot full of holes," said Bill.

By that time, we'd found the vodka.

"Come on," we said to White. He grabbed his shrapnel-pierced clothes and left with us.

On the way back to our slit trench, we passed by our hos-

pital tent. Two doctors were kneeling over the body of a young officer lying in the doorway of the tent where, a few minutes before, Nichols and I had been lying in our beds, declaring there was no point in leaving them for the shelter.

"He's dead, I'm afraid," said one of the doctors.

"Right through the head," said the other.

Two airmen came up with a stretcher. Gently they lifted the dead body of a captain from the ground. The two doctors went off with the stretcher.

I entered the tent. It smelled like a burning junk heap. I looked at my bed. It, too, was smoldering. I picked up what was left of my pillow. The pillow on which this head had been lying. Shrapnel had ripped it to shreds. I rammed it into my pocket and turned the flashlight on my bed. It looked as if a shotgun had been fired into it at close range.

"The war," said David, "is getting close to home."

Hurriedly we joined Bill White and went back to the safety of our trench. The drone of planes overhead once more. And more bombs again. After several hours, the Germans went away. I suppose they'd run out of bombs. They should have, for they dropped a great many on us. Satisfied that they'd really gone, we quit the trench and went to the mess hall, where we distributed the vodka among friends. Bill White wore his shrapnel-shattered cap and jacket. He was a mess.

"I never liked playing soldier," he said. "I don't think I shall ever put on a uniform again. Just think what would have happened to me if I'd been in that cap and jacket."

A doctor entered the tent.

"Did some Russian correspondents come down here with you all?" he asked.

We told him they did.

"Well," he explained, "two of them have been killed.

Blown to small bits. They left that railway car and a bomb got them as they tried to cross a field. They went too close to one of the anti-aircraft gun emplacements."

I judged they were trying to get to the road that led into the city and shelter.

"Are you sure about this?" I asked.

"Yes, we found the bodies. Parts of a Russian uniform were on them and one of the American correspondents told us about them."

We asked about our colleagues.

"None missing, none injured," the doctor said.

We drank hot coffee and ate some buttered bread and went out to look around. The big explosion we heard midway through the raid was from a direct hit on the gasoline dump. Officers ordered us not to go near the airfield, on which we could see our planes still burning.

Dawn came and, with it, a terrible thing.

Several short explosions were followed by twenty or thirty people wailing and crying at once. All from the direction of the airfield. We got as close as we could before sentries prevented our going farther. In the distance we saw a number of men and women in Red Army uniforms. Several officers stood near them shouting orders. The wailing finally stopped. We couldn't make out what it was all about, but a few minutes later, one of the American officers told us that the Soviet officers had marched a group of their soldiers out onto the airfield and they'd walked into whole nests of "butterfly bombs."

I knew about those bombs. They were about the size of a medium-large apple, had little projections sticking from their sides, and all in all, resembled big butterflies. When you touched one of the projections, or got near them (I never tried to settle this point by investigation) they exploded.

They were very effective anti-personnel bombs which the Germans often scattered behind a raid to hinder cleaning-up operations by their enemies.

The American officers who witnessed this incident had two versions. One was that the Red Army men were marched onto the field by officers who did not know the place was covered with butterfly bombs. The other version, and some officers swore it was true, was that the Soviet officers ordered their soldiers onto the field in order to clean it up. That they knew the men would get blown up by the bombs but that this was a sure way of clearing the field.

The wailing, they explained, was from other soldiers—men and women—who thought they would shortly be ordered onto the field to suffer the same fate.

I tried very hard to check this story. All the Soviet officers I talked to said they had not known the field was mined. When I asked a Russian private about this, he looked off in the distance and said, "I don't know." He would make no other comment, and when I tried to talk to other privates, their officers gave them orders to move on. I did learn that the women in uniform were girls from the Red Army kitchens and dining rooms. They were not soldiers in the strict sense of the term, but had been ordered down to the field to help "clear it." I could get none of them to talk about the matter.

Late that afternoon an American officer told us we were being flown back to Moscow. We were assured that the field had now been cleared by Soviet sappers, but to "be careful where you walk just the same."

This correspondent was careful as he walked through the twisted skeletons of what had been big American bombers. We learned from a high authority that, of the eighty to ninety planes that landed on the Poltava airfield the afternoon be-

fore, only four were able to fly after the raid. We could never get the exact figures of the loss on this raid, but you don't need a pencil to determine that this must have been one of the biggest losses—if not the biggest—the American Air Force ever suffered on the ground. I remember how bitter the officers were over the very poor Soviet ground defenses.

"They neither brought down nor hit a single German plane," said one general, who should have known what he was talking about.

Upon our return to Moscow, we were given to understand that there was going to be no detailed description of that raid. We also had double censorship. We sent our stories to the American Military Mission for the first censoring job and then turned them over to the Russians. It was then I learned that the Soviets held no monopoly on the censorship of correspondents' stories. Americans know how to wield a blue pencil too.

In fairness, I should report that the American authorities wanted to hang on to the bases. Not only because of their value in bombing the Rumanian oil fields and German targets in Poland, but for a long-range reason. The American Government knew Stalin was going to enter the war against Japan when Germany was finished. They wanted to have American bombing bases in Siberia from which to attack Japan. Had our stories gotten out, relating the awful loss, the inadequate Soviet defense of American equipment and personnel, the reaction might have been so vigorous in the U.S.A. that public opinion might have caused Stalin to abandon the idea of American bases in Siberia against Japan. For the record, bases were never established in Siberia, or any other place in the Soviet Union except the Poltava region.

I was never able to learn officially the number of American

dead from the raid. I saw only the one captain in front of my tent. I heard there were others, but I was given to understand the loss was very small. Not so the damage, though. Everyone admitted, off the record, that it was stupendous. And, as I say, I believe it was the closest I ever came to death. I shall be forever grateful for what sound impulse it was that caused me to get my big fat diplomatic immunity out of that bed and go to the slit trench.

31

Stationed in Moscow were two colonels, American and British, whose names, respectively, were Willington Samooche and Napoleon Brinckman. I was with Napoleon the night the war ended. Or, to be more specific, the night the Russians decided it had ended. As far as the West was concerned, the war ended the day before, but Stalin, for some reason, decided Soviet dignity had not been considered enough in the German surrender to the command in the West and made his own announcement.

The Dean of Canterbury, sometimes referred to as the "Red Dean" because of his undisguised sympathy for the Soviet Union, arrived in town just before the surrender, and he was walking through crowded Red Square the night that Napoleon Brinckman, DSO (Distinguished Service Order), MC (Military Cross), and Eddy Gilmore, AP (Associated Press), decided to converge on the area. Our passage was somewhat difficult because Napoleon insisted on driving his car through the several thousand Russians good-naturedly celebrating in the Square.

We encountered a rare sight.

As our eyes searched over this happy throng of Russians, they lit on the Dean, dressed in his habitual long frock coat and black gaiters, trying to make his way past Lenin's tomb. Some Soviet citizen saw him too, for we witnessed a large mob take out after the very reverend gentleman and capture him.

I don't know what the Dean thought, but from where I sat, he looked frightened almost to death. The Russians didn't deal with him harshly, but they laid hands on him firmly and before you could say Thomas à Becket, they tossed the gesticulating prelate into the air.

The Dean screamed once and then submitted with comparative calm. Up he went again, gaiters over frock and frock over gaiters. He has a shiny, pink, bald head, fringed with long snowy-white hair, and he was a singular sight, twisting and turning in the night air, highlighted by the many searchlights that were wheeling over Red Square.

I looked at Colonel Brinckman sitting at the car wheel by my side. A colonel in the Grenadier Guards, and a very brave man, was the colonel and I knew this was a challenge for him. This guardsman had stood off the Germans at Dunkirk until he went down, badly wounded from several holes in his body put there by machine gun bullets. He was taken to a Belgian hospital, and when the Nazis thought he lay near death, he crawled out through the roof, escaped to the Flanders countryside, and made his way into France. With the assistance of the French Underground, he somehow reached Marseille, faked his way onto a ship, and sailed to North Africa, there to be locked up by the authorities. He got out of that jug and made his way to the west coast of Africa and the safety of a British mission.

Many men would have called it a day, but not Napoleon.

He returned to England, healed his wounds, and volunteered for fighting again. His superiors mercifully sent him to Russia, where, for a while, he served as the capable acting chief of the British Military Mission. Fear was an emotion unknown to this man, and I suppose that until Victory Night, Moscow, 1945, the colonel seldom experienced indecision. But as he looked at the Dean of Canterbury, his fellow countryman, being tossed into the air, time after time, by the happy Russian mob, I saw he struggled with two conflicting thoughts—rescue the Red Dean, or leave him to the mob.

"Take the wheel," he said. "He's a bloody man, but he's an Englishman."

Napoleon plunged into the crowd to go to the assistance of the Dean, but before he reached him, the Muscovites had had enough of their fun. They set the Dean on his feet, patted him on the back, and sent him on his way. Colonel Brinckman returned to his car and we started to make our way slowly through the crowd. Then another idea struck the throng. If they could toss the Dean, why not the colonel's car?

Napoleon cottoned on to what they had in mind very quickly.

"Lock the doors on your side," he shouted.

I did as he commanded. I saw him bolt the two doors on his side. The mob clamored for us, but Napoleon kept the automobile on a slow but steady course through the crowd.

"I could run over these sods," he said, "but I don't think they deserve that."

He kept the car pointed towards St. Basil's Cathedral, but the crowd grew thicker about us. I saw most of them were laughing and smiling.

A Russian full of himself can be a very full man indeed,

and on Victory Night all the Russians, I suppose, felt very good.

"If they won't open the doors," I heard one of them say, "let's toss the car into the air."

Napoleon saw that they meant business, and if he didn't knock them down, then he nudged them with his front bumper. The nudges were sufficiently strong to impress the mob he meant business. Slowly they fell back and we got through.

But the night wasn't over.

One of my good friends, a Dutchman, stayed out very late. When he started home in his fire-engine-red roadster, the streets were practically deserted. I don't know how he did it but he managed to drive his automobile smack into a tall, elevated traffic policeman's box standing in the center of Moscow's main intersection, in front of the Moskva Hotel. He gave it a hell of a ram because it caved in the front of the car, ruined the traffic box (fortunately no policeman was inside), and succeeded in not hurting himself or any of his passengers in the slightest. He simply walked from the wreckage and strolled home, singing songs of his homeland, which had suffered so much under German occupation. I can assure you that it took his Embassy a long time to clear that incident with the Soviet authorities. Had he done that during the cold war, he would have been dealt with severely. As it was, he had to pay a fine of several thousand dollars and he was restrained from leaving the country for more than a month.

The morning after Victory Day (Russian style) I made up my mind to try to get Tamara and our daughter Vicki out of Russia. I knew this was going to be a tough job. I'd seen the war through and reported the Russian side of it with what I felt was certain fairness. I believed they would let me go, for

I am always optimistic and I saw no good reason why they shouldn't. I talked it over with Tamara and she agreed that I had been a long while from home, that she would like to meet my mother (my father had died while I was in Russia) and that now was the time to go. Accordingly, I messaged the AP and they too agreed to a home leave.

I went to see a Mr. Zinchenko, then chief of the press department, and without committing himself in the least, he heard me out. I asked him to take up the matter with the Soviet authorities.

The American Ambassador, Averell Harriman, had had a long war too, and he was thinking about going home. This was a blow in a way, for he and his lovely daughter Kathleen had certainly been friends of ours. Their parting shot was characteristic.

"Eddy," said the Ambassador, "you've got to finish out one more winter, at least. Here, take my overcoat."

Kathy loaded Tamara down with dresses.

"And here," she said, "are my leopard pants."

Averell Harriman saw Joseph Stalin more than any American in history, I suppose, and as far as I could tell, he always carried out to the letter the directions given him from Washington. Sometimes he doubted the wisdom of some of his instructions and he fought for his convictions. Not always successfully, however, but he stood up for what he thought was right.

He was one of the first people in Moscow's diplomatic corps to sense the insincerity of the Kremlin and he said so.

"The differences between the present Soviet regime and the United States," he told a group of writers once, "are irreconcilable."

Two of the writers became so indignant they left the room

and one denounced him as a "poor representative of the American Government."

Averell Harriman asked me what, if anything, he could do to help get Tamara out.

"Say something to Uncle Joe about it," I told him.

I believe he carried through on this request. I have never asked him.

At a reception given by Mr. Molotov on November 7 that year, something happened that may have had some bearing on our getting out. But let me begin at the beginning of the reception, for it was an unusual reception in many ways.

It was the first anniversary of the October Revolution since the end of the war. We knew Stalin was at his Black Sea resort, but there was a great question in our minds whether he would return for the big holiday. Editors back in the U.S.A. must have had their minds on it too, for they bombarded us with telegrams asking if Stalin was going to return to deliver a major address. We just didn't know, as was so often the case, and there was little way of finding out.

At the reception, I encountered the chief censor, Jacob Lomakin, who later figured in the Kosenkina case, when he was Soviet consul in New York.

"Meester Gilmore," he said, as he halted me inside Speridonovka castle, "I have just passed a story for your opposition saying Generalissimo Stalin has returned to Moscow."

"My God," I gasped, "I'm scooped."

The chief censor smiled.

"I'd better hurry down and write the same story," I told him.

"Don' worry," said Lomakin, "eet's not true!"

"But you passed it?" I persisted.

"Yas," he said, "an' I'm very gled."

I sighed a sigh of relief. But then I thought about the opposition. Somebody was in trouble. With the Soviet censorship operating as it was, we often sent in two versions of a story. In this case, I learned later, my opposition sent in two stories—one that Stalin had NOT returned from the Black Sea, and another that he HAD returned from the Black Sea. The censor's practice had been to let the one pass that was true and to kill the one that was not. I speak of stories of fact, now, not political stories, and so on, where the censor passed things that suited the censor whether true or not. But, in questions of fact, one could depend on the censorship to pass the true one. In this case, however, Mr. Lomakin had lowered the boom on the opposition and, sure enough, within a few hours I had a telegram from the AP's New York office announcing that the New York *Times* was carrying the opposition's story that Stalin had returned. I later saw the story under a two-column headline on page one.

"Tanned and rested from his Black Sea vacation," it read, "Generalissimo Joseph Stalin returned today to the Soviet capital."

I left Mr. Lomakin gloating over what he'd done to the opposition and fifty yards down the palace hallway found Max Litvinov, Russia's former Foreign Minister, sitting alone.

After greeting him, I prepared to leave.

"No, don't go," he said, "sit down."

Mr. Litvinov spoke good English and we talked in that language.

"How are you doing these days, Mr. Litvinov?" I asked, more in the way of making conversation than anything else.

"Not much," he answered.

"Oh, Mr. Litvinov," I laughed, "I'm sure that's not true."

"Yes, it is," he answered very seriously, and then added,

"I'm an old man, Mr. Gilmore." He sat staring at the opposite wall. "I'm an old man," he repeated. "I'm through."

It saddened me, in a way, to hear this old fighter say the things he was saying. I gently pressed him, but he changed the subject and we finally said good-by. I left him, as I found him, sitting there alone. The former Ambassador to the United States. The Soviet Union's onetime able representative to the League of Nations. He had married an English woman and she was at the reception that night. He was a Jew. Were either of these facts responsible for what had brought the usually happy, cheerful man to his obvious dejection this evening? Probably both figured in his relations with Joseph Stalin's government. It was not many months later that he and the two other Jews who were deputy foreign ministers, were "relieved of their work," as the official communiqué put it.

The third Soviet official I had a conversation with that evening was the host, Mr. Molotov. As usual, I saw him gather his wine and vodka bearers and start making the rounds of the palace, stopping here and there to drink political toasts with important people. Later in the evening, he was still going and he bore down on a group with which I was standing. As the group included two ambassadors, a general, and one minister, I gave ground.

"Oh, no, Mr. Gilmore," he said in Russian, "I want you."

Slightly amazed, I then stood my ground.

"You don't like censorship, do you?" he asked.

I saw in a flash that we were getting on hot ground. I wanted time to think and I wanted to make sure I understood him.

"Through your translator," I said, motioning to a young man standing beside the Foreign Minister, a man whom the

late Lord Inverchapel used to refer to as "Football Face," and for obvious reasons.

"Meester Molotov seez you don' lak censorship," said Football Face.

"No," I said, "no correspondent does."

"Then," said Mr. Molotov, "what do you say if I propose reciprocity?"

Football Face translated again.

That still didn't mean much to me, but I didn't want to haggle in public with the Foreign Minister. By now we were surrounded by nearly a hundred people. I had to say something.

"I think that would be fine," I said.

Football Face translated my unprofound remark to his boss.

"Then," said Mr. Molotov, "it shall be done. Let's drink a toast on it!"

A waiter handed me a full glass of the national firewater. I touched glasses with the Foreign Minister. We knocked back the contents in one gulp. I should say two gulps. Mr. Molotov's and mine.

The Foreign Minister raised his glass, Russian style, above his head and turned it upside down. This is to show that you have drunk to the bottom. The only trouble was Mr. Molotov hadn't drunk to the bottom. A heeltap splashed his massive forehead and trickled down his famous nose glasses. My glass dumped nothing on my bald head. This isn't to say that I drank better than the Foreign Minister, for he'd had quite a few that evening and all bottoms up. He smiled, shook my hand, and stalked away, his wine bearers following his broad behind. His is a large one and some party members used to call Mr. Molotov "Kamenie Zad," or "Stone Bottom."

Ambassador Harriman drew me aside.

"Reciprocity," he told me, "that's the word Molotov uses when he thinks he's giving you something. Maybe he has."

The next day we saw with amazement that the Soviet censor was not censoring any of our telegrams. As fast as we sent them in to him, he returned them for transmission to the United States. This kept up for nearly thirty beautiful days, and then the old blue pencil began cutting our hearts out again, to say nothing of our copy.

32

The Russians love crooners.

I discovered this shortly after I arrived in the Soviet Union. The two most beloved crooners were Vertinsky and Loshinko. When I reached Russia, neither of them was living in the U.S.S.R. Probably aware that their profession didn't fall within the goals of the Communist Revolution, they got out in a hurry. A long time ago.

These two émigrés were frowned upon by the Communist party cultural bosses and their phonograph records were on sale in no Moscow shop, yet, year after year, the people bootlegged them back home. These two Russian singers, making records in faraway lands, were definitely at the top of the hit parade on the samovar circuit. Nearly every Russian apartment I visited had a Vertinsky or a Loshinko hidden away for special occasions and special guests. They brought tremendous prices on the black market, selling for fifteen and twenty times the price of records made by approved Soviet singers.

I knew something of his background when I met Alex-

ander Nikolaiovich Vertinsky and his beautiful young wife, Lela, in the Metropole Hotel in Moscow.

"I want you to meet Vertinsky," said Sidney Hollander, an American fur buyer and one of the kindest guys in the world.

"Not the crooner?" I asked.

"Sure, that's the one."

"But he's in Paris or Shanghai or someplace," I said.

"Well, maybe he was, but he's here in this hotel right now and you're going to meet him in a few minutes."

Sidney produced the great man and his wife and we all went to the Aradgvi Restaurant for dinner.

Tamara was almost spellbound in the presence of Alexander Nikolaiovich, and he seemed pretty impressed by Tamara. It was like an American girl sitting down with Eddie Fisher, Bing Crosby, or Frank Sinatra. And vice versa.

Vertinsky is a remarkable-looking man. He is about six feet two inches tall. He has a long narrow face with high arching eyebrows. His blond hair starts at a widow's peak on his aristocratic forehead and slopes back unbroken to the nape of his neck. He has long, finely shaped fingers. His shoulders are broad, and despite the high living that this man has enjoyed all over the world, he hasn't the suggestion of a pouch. Neither below his chest nor below his eyes. Today he must be nearing seventy, but he carries himself like a man of thirty, dresses extremely well, and his conversation is often brilliant. He speaks French as well as Russian.

Before the evening was over I found out that he'd ended up in China, had been kicked about by the Japanese, and had at last decided to come back home to Mother Russia.

"But can you sing your songs here?" I asked.

"Yes. I've been assured I can."

His wife, the beautiful Lela, daughter of two Russian émigrés in China, was about twenty-six. They had one baby, a little girl, who'd been left at the hotel this night with a nurse. Lela spoke almost perfect English.

From here I gathered that Vertinsky had returned home with special assurances of forgiveness from no less a person than V. M. Molotov.

"He will have a concert soon," she explained. "You must come."

In about two weeks Lela telephoned and said two tickets would be waiting for us at the box office of a downtown theater. This had certainly never happened to me before in Russia. We arrived at the theater about fifteen minutes the right side of curtain time and ran into a thrashing mob. People by the hundreds were trying to get in to hear Vertinsky.

"It's like old times," said a gray-haired woman I knew. "Before the Revolution girls and grown women lined up for blocks to hear him. Look what's happening tonight."

After a hard struggle, I dragged Tamara through this milling, shouting crowd and into the theater. Every seat was taken. Even our two seats, but the usher pitched the poachers out. A perfect hush went over the audience as the lights lowered and the curtain parted. A young man with black hair and a very pale expressionless face walked stiffly out on the stage and sat down at the shiny grand piano. From the opposite wing out walked Vertinsky, dressed in white tie and a tail suit that fit his figure perfectly. A large diamond sparkled on his left hand. A roar of applause greeted him. He bowed coldly, looked at his accompanist, and began.

It was a very strange voice. Not strong, and certainly not the voice of a young man, but it took only a moment's listening to realize you were in the presence of a professional. And

someone completely different from anyone you'd ever heard.

His first song was "The Yellow Angel."

It related how he, a singer, was performing in a Paris night club on Christmas Eve. He wanted nothing so much as a good square meal, for he had no money. He'd spent it on women. In fact, he owed money and he hadn't eaten for a long while. But no one in this night club on Christmas Eve thought of asking him to sit down to a hot supper. No. But they would send him bottle after bottle of champagne. When the last customer had gone and the waiters had finished their dreary work of cleaning up the place, he, the hungry, tired singer had no place to go. Loaded with too much champagne, he lay down on the floor between the tables and the upturned chairs and went to sleep. It was then that the yellow angel woke him up and fed and comforted him.

I looked at the people around me. Tears poured down their faces. Women were softly sobbing. Men were crying. Unashamed. There was certainly a heaviness in my chest. This man had a definite talent. I knew that I had never encountered a singer like Alexander Vertinsky. He wasn't a singer, really. He was a crooner, but not like any I'd ever heard.

The Russian people, weary, weary, weary of listening to singers yodel about the new Five Year Plan, about the tractor factory, about the "bright, happy" members of the Young Communist League, were simply starved for romance and the sort of stuff Vertinsky was giving them.

They clapped and shouted when he finished his first song. Again he bowed without a smile. No trace of emotion. This was very effective, I thought. He seemed almost unaware of his audience. Just that small, very formal bow.

His next song was "Without Women."

"How wonderful it is," he began, "to be without women for once. To sit down with a good male friend and drink pure scotch whisky."

I could hardly believe my ears. And it was certainly difficult to believe this man could get away with singing this sort of stuff.

Avalanches of applause marked the end of every song. The music was very close to Gypsy. The chords were mostly minor. They were always soft and melodic. And the words were fascinating. Vertinsky wrote most of them and Tamara explained to me that one of the drinking companions of Vertinsky's youth had been the romantic pre-Revolutionary poet, Alexander Blok. I was aware of his verse. Some of it was very moving.

Vertinsky sang his version of "Two Guitars" and then something in which he spoke to his lover, "Madame, will you love me in the autumn as you do in spring?"

The curtains fell for intermission, but the audience wouldn't hear of that. Alexander Nikolaiovich Vertinsky had to do nine encores before they let him stop. The second half of the program was a repetition of the appreciation of the first, and the poor man did thirteen encores after he had said good night. I never heard a greater triumph, but I was terribly afraid that he wasn't going to get away with this sort of singing and this type of song very long. He hadn't mentioned the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin, the Communist party, the Red Army, or the Five Year Plan even once, and his listeners really gave him a vote of thanks. I cannot imagine a greater audience-artist relationship in a theater.

Lela came out and took us backstage. There wasn't much I could say to this man. The audience had said everything, but Tamara kissed him on the cheek and he seemed to appreciate that.

I got to know him as a real friend. I visited his apartment—for he soon moved out of the Metropole into a six-room flat on Gorky Street. As the money from concerts poured in, he went to Leningrad and bought loads of Napoleonic furniture. He dressed his pretty wife in furs and fine clothes (made by hand in Moscow tailor shops).

One night I had the Vertinskys and George and Annelise Kennan to dinner. George was then the American Embassy's Minister-Counselor. I didn't tell him the Vertinskys would be present and he didn't catch the name when I introduced them. Halfway through dinner, George turned to me and asked in English, "Who is this man?"

"Vertinsky, the singer," I said.

"My heavens," gasped George, "NOT Alexander Vertinsky?"

"The same."

George swung around on him and told him how he'd collected his records over the years and how he liked them. Vertinsky always appreciates a beautiful woman and Mrs. Kennan is one. I don't know which he appreciated most—George's praise, or Annelise's fine looks.

"Life," Vertinsky once told me, "is too short to spend it with ugly women. I avoid them."

He took me on the greatest party I ever attended in Russia. It was his birthday and he hired a special banquet room at the Metropole. He had seventy-two guests and I was the only foreigner. All of them were famous singers, actors, writers, actresses, ballerinas, musicians, painters, or theatrical directors. I sat between an actress from the Moscow Art Theatre and Valentina Serove, a movie actress, the wife of Konstantin Simonov.

Serova was a beautiful woman. Marshal Rokossovsky once

fell in love with her, but she turned him down for Simonov, the writer. Simonov wrote some poems about her and they fell into Stalin's hands. A Russian who ought to know told me that Uncle Joe sighed as he shut the book and remarked, "Only the woman for whom these were written should see this book. It's too personal." That was the closest to sentiment that I suppose the grim dictator ever got. Incidentally, I should have liked very much to have read those verses.

"Were they romantic?" I asked Serova.

"You could kindle a fire with them," she said.

At one point during the dinner, one of the guests (I forget which one) stood on the table and proposed a toast to "all of us poor artists."

His Russian was hard to follow and I asked a man who spoke good English to translate for me. He did. Simultaneously.

"Our poor mothers," said the man on the table, "gave us talent. We pursue the arts, but we never catch them. No, Tovarichi, we really never catch them. But how much finer it would have been if, instead of allowing us to pursue the arts, our fathers had left us, say a string of whore houses? How fine, indeed, and just think how the money would have rolled in."

That's what I like about Russian parties. They make the damnedest toasts and say the most surprising things.

When the cold war got frigid, we lost the Vertinskys as friends. We never called them and they never called us. Sasha (for that's what I grew to know him by) had to tone down his singing and include some Five Year Plans in the key of *C*.

They put him in a propaganda movie a few years ago. He wore a scarlet robe and portrayed a wicked cardinal in one

of the iron curtain countries. Oh, yes, he was spying for the Americans. Vertinsky got the Stalin prize for his acting in that film and I never saw such a hamlike performance.

Lela was painting pictures and acting in movies on the side the last I heard of her. She and Sasha produced one more child and Lela had the Moscow audiences gasping at her beauty in a celluloid version in color of *Sadko* in 1953.

I brought one record of Vertinsky's with me to America. It was made in France and is called, "Song of Love." It's really an old Gypsy tune, "I Dream of a Garden."

I took it over to my friend Joe Callaway's, one night and without saying anything about it, started playing it on his phonograph. Mary Lib, his very discerning young wife, walked over to the machine.

"Will you play that again?" she asked. "It's Russian, isn't it?"

I played it again.

"That's one of the most fascinating things I ever heard," she said.

I picked up the record. Vertinsky recorded it in Paris nineteen years ago.

I shall always remember most fondly Alexander Nikolaiovich Vertinsky. A strange sort of crooner-genius, if you can hyphenate such dissimilar words.

33

The year 1946 was a good year for us.

I won the Pulitzer Prize, the Headliners Club Award, and a special citation from Sigma Delta Chi.

I had a written interview with Joseph Stalin.

And—I got Tamara and Vicki out of the Soviet Union.

The written interview with Stalin made quite a splash around the world. The breaks one gets in this life are truly strange. I simply asked Stalin some questions that he wanted to answer. They arrived at the right time and he answered them. He might just as well have answered any of the other letters that correspondents were sending him. But, he chose to send me a reply, and among the several dozen telegrams that I received from all over was one from William L. Lawrence, of the New York *Times*.

CONGRATULATIONS STOP YOURE GONNER GET TAMARA OUT NOW.

Bill was right.

The interview came in March. In mid-April, late one afternoon, I was lying on my bed when the telephone beside my pillow rang.

"Meester Gilmore, Meester Zinchenko vants to spik to you," said a girl's voice.

Mr. Zinchenko was still chief of the press department. Today I believe he's a secretary of the United Nations. One of the more reasonable Russian officials I know.

"Mr. Gilmore," he began, "congratulations!"

"For what?" I asked.

"Your wife gets her exit visa to leave the Soviet Union!"

"Say that again," I demanded.

Mr. Zinchenko repeated the great news.

"When can she go?"

"Whenever she wants to. Just go to the visa department and she will be given her documents."

Of course, nothing is ever that simple in the U.S.S.R. I told Tamara to wait for a couple of days. This she did, and when

she appeared at the visa bureau, the chief shrugged his shoulders and said he'd heard nothing about an exit visa for her. I called the press department. They were sure some mistake had been made. The visa had been granted. Back to the visa bureau. Nothing new there. After six days, the visa chief telephoned and told Tamara her exit visa was ready.

"Now?" she asked.

"Of course," he said, with weighty formality, "why not?"

We spent our last night at dinner in the French Embassy. I remember Frank Roberts and his charming wife, Cela, were also guests.

Frank is now something quite grand in the British Foreign Office. Cela has always been grand.

"Eddy," he said, "I hope you won't return. We like you both, but we'd prefer continuing our friendship in some other country."

Averell Harriman also warned me against returning. But one of my closest American friends, an experienced colonel, told me Russia was the greatest news story in the world and, with my background, I'd be a fool not to return. In my heart I believed that, having got Tamara out once, I could do it again. Of course, time has proven me right, but, oh, what anxiety over my Russian wife and children in the meantime.

We were accompanied to the airport by a group of American and British friends, Tamara's sister Zina, and a pretty Russian girl named Tanya Peleponitzina. Vicki wasn't two two years old. We were flying out via Berlin and our transport was an old DC 3 with bucket seats. Neither Tamara nor Vicki had been in a plane before, the trip was rough, and they were sick all the way to the onetime German capital. We got out on the green grass of a temporary airport in the Russian zone. I knew my good friend Lieutenant General

Walter B. (Beedle) Smith, the new American Ambassador in Moscow, had wired General Lucius Clay to look out for us. While we were trying to sort ourselves out on the sod around the airport shack, an American automobile arrived and I spotted an American uniform. The man in the uniform introduced himself as Captain Rugala. He spoke excellent Russian and he said General Clay had sent the car for us. He took us to what must have been a millionaire's house and left us in the hands of three servants.

I certainly felt crummy. My only suit was an old shiny blue serge that was too small for me. Clothes had been almost impossible to get in Russia, but from Kathleen Harriman and other good friends, we'd gotten enough dresses to see that Tamara looked presentable. I'm afraid Vicki was about as badly off as I was. But, anyhow, we went out that night for Tamara's very first night west of the iron curtain. She certainly enjoyed it. General Clay dispatched a kind brigadier general to look after us and we did the rounds. No visiting American could have been given better V.I.P. treatment than we got from Georgia Boy (General Clay from Marietta, Georgia).

We flew in a British plane to London the next day and put up in a nice, but somewhat shabby, flat. I hadn't realized just what troubles England had gone through. This was May 1946 and she was still smarting from the wounds of war. We waited in London for nearly three weeks until we could get passage on a ship. One day I came back to the apartment with the tickets.

"Will it be nice?" asked Tamara.

"It'll be perfect, for it'll be an American ship," I answered. "The *Argentina.* I know it well."

It was the *Argentina,* all right, but still sailing as she did

during the war when she was a troopship. I bunked in a cabin with eight other men and Tamara and Vicki were in a room with five women and four children. The dining room I'd bragged about consisted of wooden tables with long boards for benches.

"Whatcha want for breakfast, bud," asked our waiter, "aiggs or hot cakes?"

Silently we waited for our "aiggs."

"Are you sure America is as nice as you say it is?" asked Tamara.

"Just you wait and see," I said.

She did and she liked it. We spent three months in the United States, and when the Associated Press asked me to return to Moscow, I offered but faint resistance.

"There is always the chance that I won't get out again with Tamara," I suggested.

My boss was confident that I did it once and I could do it again. He, too, was correct.

I'm a child of a large corporation and I returned to Russia with my Russian wife and our daughter, then two years old. In Stockholm I had real misgivings and cabled a friend, asking if he could put Tamara and Vicki up if I sent them back and returned to Russia alone. It was an unreasonable request. He had a big family, but had he said "Yes," I would have bundled them off back home.

A week later, we were back in the Soviet Union. Back in our old apartment, which looked older and shabbier than ever now. The cold war began. Things changed all around us. I sensed that I might have great trouble in getting Tamara out again. She became ill and spent seven weeks in a hospital. They gave her 190 shots of penicillin. She lost twenty-eight pounds. I applied for an exit visa for her again.

The chief of the press department met me with a cold stare.

"We have the best hospitals in the world in the Soviet Union," he said. "Your wife can recuperate here."

The dark winter of 1946–47 ended with a Council of Ministers meeting in Moscow. It helped us psychologically, for I saw a lot of my friends.

We worked hard and played hard during the many days this resultless conference dragged on. One of the best gatherings, I believe, was a party at our apartment, where Harold Stassen, who happened to visit Moscow at this time, played the bass fiddle for a while with the old Kremlin Krows band, now, of course, known as Joe Commode and His Four Flushers. I hope that name didn't worry Harold. General Clay was on hand for that party. He'd come over from Berlin. General Smith looked in. And it was wonderful having in our house such newspaper and radio friends as Carl McCardle, now an Assistant Secretary of State; Cy Peterman, Wes Gallagher, John Hightower, Cecil Dixon, Cy Sulzberger, Henry Cassidy, Bill McGaffin, Paul Ward, and a dozen others whose names escape me now.

The Council of Ministers adjourned their session the latter part of April. We were writing the finishing stories when my office telephone rang.

"Eddy," said Tanya Peleponitzina, the girl who'd seen us off at the airport when we left for the U.S.A., "could I see you tonight about eleven o'clock?"

I looked at my watch. It was then ten-thirty.

"Tanya," I replied, "this is the closing night of the conference. I couldn't possibly get away. Won't tomorrow do?"

There was a pause.

"Yes, I suppose so. Then, I'll see you tomorrow morning?"

"Yes."

"Good night, Tanya."

"Good night, Eddy."

The next morning, one of Tanya's girl friends telephoned me.

"It's important," she said. "Can you meet me right now?"

She gave me a street corner as a meeting place. I hurried over.

"Tanya," she said, "was arrested early this morning."

"For what reason?" I asked.

"What reason do they ever give? What reason do they need? She's arrested. She's gone."

Tanya was a pretty petite brunette. She had a shapely figure, loved a good time, and played the piano with great feeling. She sang in a low sad voice and the way she sang and played "The Very Thought of You" is something I shall not lightly forget.

Tanya received a ten-year sentence. I never heard from her, or of her, again. I hope that the present Soviet Government, which has pardoned some people who were illegally arrested and sentenced, will someday review Tanya's case and release her. She is too beautiful and loves life too much and is too entirely innocent of any crime to put away in a Siberian prison camp.

More of the girls we knew followed Tanya. I think I must have known by name fifteen or twenty who disappeared. Their crime? They knew and associated with foreigners, principally Americans. It was as simple as that.

The cold war was blowing very frigid.

34

I have been touted by established experts in various parts of the world but nowhere with the grim determination and eternal optimism of Valentine Petrovich, a Russian horse player.

He would clutch his throat with his right hand, screw up his face, and say, "You can bet this horse, right up to here."

This self-throat-clutching was the gesture Valentine Petrovich employed to denote a sure thing. One on which you could place all your rubles with a certainty of winning. Like touts everywhere, he ran better than his horses.

Betting on horses in Russia is a hazardous game. Until we revised the system, there were only two ways to bet—"Express" and "Double."

To bet "Express," you bought a ticket on two horses in the same race. You picked one of them to come in first and the other to come second. If they finished in any other order, you lost, and this was very often.

To bet "Double," you bought a ticket on two horses in two consecutive races. You had to pick both of them to come in first and if they did win their respective races, then you won, too.

"But why," I complained, "can't I bet on a horse to win a single race?"

"Because," explained Valentine Petrovich, who always, summer and winter, wore high black boots, a blue cap with a patent leather visor, and a black trench coat, "the people wouldn't like it that way. They would not bet."

I argued with him.

"I'm sure they would. It's so much simpler."

"But the Russians," he explained, "are not simple people. They are complex people. They like complex things."

"I don't believe it."

Valentine Petrovich clutched his throat.

"Eddy Eddyovich," he gasped, "bet 4 and 2 in this coming race right up to here."

"But you said that back in the third race."

"And I would have been right if it had not been for that swine Morozov pulling up his horse at the thousand-meter mark."

I gave him two hundred rubles and told him to bet it. He did and we won. Get that. He bet my money and we won. I shared the winnings with him, but like every other tout-and-touted deal, he didn't share in my losses. Only our winnings. The losses were definitely mine.

From that point on out, Valentine Petrovich could never go wrong this particular race day. I think we won about four thousand rubles, which is a thousand dollars. I cut him in for a good percentage.

"Wait here," he ordered. I saw him dash for the bar and knock back several vodkas in succession. Then he marched up the steps to the director's office and in a few minutes descended with a fat, black-bearded man.

Valentine Petrovich was no ruble-nurser. When he had money he spent it. He waved me over to the bar, introduced me to the director of Moscow's Hippodrome Race Track, and ordered a round. After the ceremony had been completed, he raised the question of the method of betting with the director.

"Eddy Eddyovich," he explained, "wants to bet on only

one horse. I told him you would never have the authority to set up such a system."

The bearded director drew himself up.

"Why shouldn't I have the authority?" he asked. "Am I not the director?"

"Yes," answered Valentine Petrovich, and then he shrugged his shoulders. It was a magnificent gesture. It said, "I don't want to hurt your feelings, but how could a stupid muzhik like you possibly dare to think of such a thing?"

"Ita budyet! Ita budyet!" said the director, hammering on the bar with his vodka glass for another round.

"Ita budyet!" in this case meant "It will be done."

Sure enough, the next racing day, the announcer told the crowd that a window had been opened whereby players could bet their money on a single horse to win. I played this window and so did several of my foreign friends. But precious few Russians played it. The odds were not large, for there are not many horses in a Russian horse race.

"You see," said Valentine Petrovich, after the single-win window had been open for about three weeks, "only you play here. It's too simple. Don't you know the Russians are the greatest chess players in the world? This is because chess is a complicated game. We like nothing simple."

"Marxism, for instance," I suggested.

"Let's eliminate the politics," said Valentine Petrovich.

"All right. I agree with your point. Let's thank the director and tell him to close the window."

Later in the day, when the sun was setting over the Belorussky Vokszal, down by the first-quarter post, Valentine Petrovich called me aside.

"The director," he explained, "had authority to open the window, but he has no authority to close it."

"No?"

"It takes a meeting of the track judges to close any window."

I laughed out loud.

"Why do you laugh, Eddy Eddyovich?"

"So typically Russian," I said. "Dostoevski wrote about you all. He knew you so well."

Valentine Petrovich looked at me as if I had said something profound that he couldn't understand.

Three days later Bill Eldridge, a chancery worker at the British Embassy, and I hit upon a scheme to win at the Russian race track. All we needed was a lot of rubles. Together we managed to scrape up about ten thousand. Without going into the system, let me explain that it wasn't a bad one. What we counted on and hoped for was a long shot coming in next to a favorite. We caught one of these our first day and collected about twenty thousand rubles. At the end of the day we were sixteen thousand rubles ahead and we divided this 50–50.

Bill told me his father was an English Gypsy and his mother a Cockney. He was a rare combination, and for four straight race days, he and I had the combination on winning at the Hippodrome. Then the director intervened, apologized, and explained the track could take no more of our bets when we bet on practically every horse in the race.

I got to know a lot of the people in the race business and I learned that about three races out of every fifteen are fixed. I was never able to get advance information on which two horses were going to win these fixed races, but at least my friends tipped me when to lay off.

One cold afternoon of November 7—the anniversary of the

October Revolution—Valentine Petrovich staggered into the kitchen door of my apartment.

"Excuse me, Eddy Eddyovich," he said, "but I am drunk and sorry."

"Sorry for what?"

"For myself."

He sat down and told me his life's story. How his father once ran the biggest fruit business in Russia. And how rich they were. They had servants and horses and carriages. And then came the Revolution and the state took over his father's business AND his father.

"That," he said, with a sob, "is why I spend all my time at the race track. It is the only thing that takes my mind off my troubles."

He related a fantastic story. How he was once the publisher of the official racing program, but a careless printer made a mistake one day and he lost his job because of it.

The printer misplaced two letters and the word came out in the program *Zhopa. Zhopa,* in Russian slang, means one's backside. Unmistakably that, and nothing else.

"Bad luck," observed Valentine Petrovich. "Unhorsed by an ass."

This discussion took place about six years before I left Russia for good. The last Sunday I was in that land, I looked in for a few minutes at the Hippodrome. Valentine Petrovich was there, black trench coat, blue cap with patent leather visor, and his high black boots.

"Eddy Eddyovich, God of mine, where have you been?"

I told him it was not where I'd been but where I was going.

"Before you go," he said as he whipped out a much fingered program, "here is one you can bet up to here."

He clutched his throat in the old familiar gesture.

I shouldn't have done it, but I handed him four hundred rubles.

"Bet it," I told him, "up to here."

I clutched my throat with one hand, raised my hat with the other, and walked out of the old Tsarist race track. I suppose I shall never see it again. And that's just as well.

35

I had read Chekov's amusing story "Dachniki," but I never imagined I'd be one of them.

The *dacha* plays a big part in the life of virtually every Russian who lives in a city. The word means "summer house," and every city dweller believes it's imperative that he live in a *dacha* in the warm months. Or at least a few weeks during the summertime.

Tamara insisted that Moscow during the months of June, July, and August was no place for a child.

"We must get a *dacha,*" she commented.

"All right, how do we go about it?"

"You just go out in the country and look for one."

"There's an awful lot of country around Moscow."

"All the better. More *dachas* to be found."

"I'm a foreigner, you know," I observed. "People are not going to be very happy about renting me a *dacha,* or even a half *dacha.*"

Many Russians rent only the second floor, or the first floor of a two-story *dacha.* Others simply rent one or two rooms for the summer. We decided on a second floor, if we could

find one, and set out in our automobile, the driver Anatole at the wheel.

I should explain that all correspondents in Moscow had chauffeurs. It had been a practice long established. I would have much preferred driving myself, but it did offer difficulties. Especially in the wintertime. And, peculiar to the Soviet Union, one's garage always seemed to be located at least two miles from one's apartment. During my final two years in Moscow, the garage was all the way across the city, about seven miles distant. We hired chauffeurs who'd been approved by the government, which in this case meant the secret police. What it amounted to was that we paid a man to help keep tabs on us for the secret police. Their salaries were high. The last one got five hundred dollars a month. Had he been working for a Soviet citizen, his pay would have been around a hundred dollars monthly.

To a man almost, they were terrible drivers and had not the slightest feeling for machinery. They drove you nearly crazy the way they pushed the clutch in and out forty and fifty times in the space of a journey from your apartment house to the peasant market. Others had the habit of throwing the car out of gear in the middle of a block when the road was clear ahead.

"Why do you do that?" I asked.

"To save gasoline," Anatole replied.

"I doubt if that saves any gasoline and I'm sure it does wear out the clutch."

He smiled at me indulgently. His look said, "The poor foreign fool. He doesn't know what he's talking about."

An American sergeant-mechanic at the U. S. Embassy became so exasperated over the chauffeur's practice of throwing the car out of gear in the middle of a block that he began

riding next to the drivers armed with a small baseball bat.

Every time they unnecessarily touched the gear shift he'd whack their forearms.

I once had a driver named Ilya. Riding in the country with him one morning, I thought I detected him going out of his way to run through every horse and cow manure pile on the road. In Russia this takes some doing, for lots of horses and cows walk the highways. I studied this operation for several miles to be sure I had made no mistake.

"Heavenly God," I said to him in Russian, "why are you doing that?"

"Doing what?"

I explained. In basic Russian.

"Gospodin," he replied, "don't you know? That stuff is good for the tires."

But to get back to *dachas.*

We found a very pretty *dacha* about fifteen miles east of Moscow. The occupant and his wife were "agriculturists" and they said they'd be glad to rent us the upstairs three rooms for the summer.

"You know from my accent," I explained, "that I'm a foreigner. I'm an American."

"It makes no difference," they chorused.

We gave them a down payment, told them we'd move in in a week, shook hands, left them our telephone number, and departed.

The next day the wife called. She was terribly sorry but she couldn't let us have the *dacha.* She sounded very frightened. We asked why she had changed her mind.

"I'm sorry," she replied, "I must say good-by. Please don't try to see us any more."

The secret police, had, of course, been on to that family.

I suppose our chauffeur tipped the police off. That is, if they hadn't followed us.

I grew so accustomed to being followed by the M.V.D. that I usually paid little attention to it. It was always the same with me—the little Pobeda automobile with a driver and three plain-clothes policemen tailing along behind our car.

Tamara and I decided we wouldn't go through this embarrassment again. And our trying to rent a *dacha* directly from Soviet citizens might get them into trouble.

We appealed to Burobin, the place we appealed for everything.

This adjunct of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was set up, theoretically, to deal with the foreigner's every need. It was one of the most impossible and bureaucratic organizations I have ever encountered anywhere and I believe most foreigners who have lived in the U.S.S.R. will agree with me. I hate to make this admission, but during the last two years we were in Moscow, it did get a lot better.

When we asked them for a *dacha,* they replied they had none and had no possibilities of securing any. I knew this was an evasion, for I knew foreigners who were renting them through Burobin. But that's the way this organization worked. Therefore, we showed no surprise when, two weeks later, Burobin telephoned and said they had a *dacha* we might like and asked us to look at it.

It was a two-story wooden house located in Mamontovka, twenty-five miles northeast of Moscow, three miles off the Yaroslavl Highway.

It had a glassed-in porch, two rooms, a kitchen, and a back porch downstairs and two rooms and a small glassed-in balcony upstairs. It was surrounded by pine trees in a fenced

lot about a hundred yards long by fifty yards wide. The "john," as in all Russian *dachas,* was located downlot, about seventy-five yards from the house. The stove burned wood. There was electricity, thank goodness, but no running water. The back porch contained a sink and water pipes, but the water wasn't connected.

"We'll try to get it connected," said the man from Burobin.

Tamara and I discussed the situation in English and agreed we'd take it. One of the things that made it attractive was a large open space in which I knew I could plant a garden. Another was a nearby creek which promised good swimming.

We moved in before the week was out and there began one of the happiest phases of my long stay in Russia. We had great good times at the *dacha.* We entertained many friends there. Everyone from chancery servants at the British Embassy to Sir David and Lady Kelly and scores of Americans, from ambassadors to privates in the military attaché's office.

John Waterfield, one of the bright young men of whom the Foreign Office seems to have so many, eyed me suspiciously as he saw me break the first ground for my garden.

"One word of advice," he cautioned, "never build a garden any bigger than your wife can tend."

John hadn't married his beautiful wife, Lee, at that time. I wonder what his opinions on building gardens are today.

That was a particularly happy marriage for us, by the way. John and Lee were coming to see us one night and we were waiting for them in our living room, drinking tea, when we heard John's automobile, a disgraceful-looking thing, chug up beneath the living-room window.

"Here they are," I said to Tamara, who went and fetched two more teacups.

Then we waited and waited.

"Why don't they come in?" asked my wife.

"Oh," I said, "you know how it is with young love. Either words of love, or a row. They'll be along soon."

After thirty minutes the doorbell rang. I let John and Lee in. They were radiant.

"Congratulate us," said John.

"Of course, but for what now?"

"Lee has promised to marry me!"

"When did this happen?"

"Just now," said Lee, a big smile on her pretty face, "beneath your window."

"God bless you both," said Tamara, kissing them warmly.

It has been a most happy union of Britain and America. They have two lovely children and seem supremely happy in their Vincent Square flat in London.

We had twelve guests down to the *dacha* one late summer night. They included the godfather-to-be of one of our children, Hans Moller, of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Hans is six feet, five inches tall, very thin, handsome in a blond Scandinavian way, and possessed of a charming sense of humor.

The moon was down. It was dark and about midnight and we decided to go swimming. Hans dumped his clothes in what he thought was a safe spot, but he emerged from the water twenty minutes afterwards to hear a real Russian row in the direction of his clothes pile. He approached the noise and, in the dark, discovered two Russian men fighting over his clothes. They were not trying to steal them, but they were drunk and each one thought the other was trying to steal HIS clothes. Straightening out that mess took some doing and two flashlights. This long slim Dane arguing with

a pair of drunken Slavs on the muddy bank of a Russian creek gave us something to talk about the rest of the night. Not that we ever lacked talking subjects.

I suppose I indulged in, or listened to, more good talk down at the *dacha* than ever before in my life. We would have big parties sitting at a long dinner table out in the yard beneath the pine trees and Tamara would see to it that the wine flowed freely. We got to serving Danish snaps, which is just as strong, if not stronger, than vodka. Per Vennomoe, of the Norwegian Embassy, always referred to it as "Danish white wine."

I was the only foreigner living in the village of Mamontovka for several summers and I was completely surrounded by Russians. We got to know many of them and they never showed us anything but kindness. I have many good friends in that village, and throughout the years, even during the period when the hate-America campaign was at its height, I never heard any of those villagers express anything but nice sentiments about my country, the United States of America.

"Gospodin," said a woman one night. "In the last war your country sent us many things. It sent us food. I know because my three children ate it and I ate it. It kept us from going hungry and I shall always thank your country for this. Now, if we should have a war with you [she crossed herself] you won't be sending us food, you'll be dropping bombs on us. God of mine, we'll all die."

One night I was awakened from a deep sleep by angry voices three *dachas* away. A man and his wife were arguing. And at the top of their voices.

"I'm a hero of the Soviet Union," he shouted, "and who are you? You're a *zhopa!*"

Hero of the Soviet Union is about the highest title in the

country. *Zhopa,* as I explained in the preceding chapter, is at the other end of the line.

I smiled to myself, for the hero of the Soviet Union was so pleased with what he considered a very neat phrase, and, no doubt, what he also considered was a fair description of his mate, that he repeated it over and over. Far into the Russian night.

Down at the *dacha* I discovered that Canadian seeds grow extremely well in Russian soil. I don't know that this piece of intelligence will ever do anyone any good, but there it is. A Canadian friend, Geoffrey Govier, of Montreal, sent me packets of seed every year and every summer we had wonderful peas, string beans, turnips, carrots, and radishes.

Radio reception at the *dacha* was splendid. One cannot hear the Voice of America, or Radio Free Europe, in the Russian-language broadcasts in Moscow, for the jamming is so good that these programs are completely blocked out. At the *dacha,* twenty-five miles from Moscow, I could hear them almost around the clock.

A Russian came to me one time.

"Gospodin," he said, "I was listening to the Voice of America last night and your announcer told a great lie."

"What did he say?" I asked.

"He said the Stalin government had ten million citizens of the Soviet Union in jails or concentration camps. Now, Gospodin, that's a lie. If he'd said we had fifteen million in jail, I'd believe him, but not ten million."

Dachniki means people who live in *dachas.* I never liked being anything in Russia so much as being one of the *dachniki.*

36

I was having dinner with Colonel (now Brigadier) Dennis Wynne-Pope and John Waterfield when the telephone rang. I recognized the voice of Tamara's sister Zina.

"Congratulations," she said in Russian.

"How is Tamara?" I asked.

"She's fine and so is your new daughter. Congratulations!"

"Can I see them?"

"Of course you can't," Zina replied.

Thus heralded the birth of Susanna Hager Gilmore, the middle name after my staunch friend William H. Hager, Jr., of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, who, through thick and thin, managed to get packages of necessary wearing apparel and household goods to Moscow. He even got a television set built for me to Russian specifications.

I announced the news to the colonel and John. They broke out the champagne. We consumed three bottles in no time and then set out for the hospital. For ammunition along the journey, we took three more bottles. The time was nine-thirty of a January evening and it was cold outside.

The Soviet maternity home system forbids the father and husband from seeing the child and mother until they are ready to leave the hospital. There's nothing you can do about it. You just wait for ten days or two weeks and communicate by telephone or letter with your wife.

"Presents for the mother and child," ordered Wynne-Pope.

"Nothing's too good for Tamara," added Waterfield.

We set out in the colonel's car, the colonel illegally at the wheel, for he had no Soviet driving license, but didn't let it

bother him in the slightest. The colonel made for a store he knew to be open. We drank more toasts to Tamara and the newly born on the way to the shop. The colonel arrived and parked the car in a no-parking place.

"Leave everything to me," he said.

"Tamara likes apples," I volunteered.

"She shall have them and more," he said as he entered the store.

John proposed another toast.

"The champagne is running low," he observed. "Never mind, there's more at my flat."

The colonel emerged from the store, his huge arms laden with packages for Tamara. I had written a note and we roared off for the hospital. I wasn't quite sure I could find it, but after several false turnings we made it.

I got out and beat on the locked front door. The mercury was down around 20 below zero, but that didn't worry me. I was a father again. A nurse opened the door. I gave her all the presents—apples, candy, and a bottle of cognac and three letters, one from each of us.

I don't rightly recollect where we went from there, but we pestered that maternity home all night long, inquiring after the condition of Tamara and the new child. I can hardly imagine a mother and child having more toasts drunk for them than we put back that evening.

"I hate to inject a solemn note into the happy occasion," said the colonel about 4:00 A.M., "but, my boy, you've got the grandfather problem of all."

"What's that?"

"You've got to get Tamara, Vicki, and now Susanna out of Russia. Let's speak frankly. Do you believe you'll ever manage it?"

"Of course I will. You don't even consider the possibility of not being able to do it. You don't even think about that," I said.

"Then here's to you all getting out," said the colonel.

"And soon," added John.

We continued to try and with no satisfactory result. General Smith took the matter up. Admiral Alan G. Kirk, when he was Ambassador, raised the question with Andrei Gromyko, when he was Deputy Foreign Minister. I wrote letters to Stalin. The general manager of the Associated Press wrote letters to Stalin. My mother appealed to him. Silence. No answer. Which, of course, was the same as saying "No."

I wasn't the only American in Russia with a Russian wife. There were others who hung on. Some Americans had been forced to leave Moscow and say good-by to their wives. These were tragic cases.

These men loved their wives and their wives loved them. They just wanted to be together. But they were not in a position to remain on in the Soviet Union, as six of the rest of us were.

When the husbands left, the M.V.D. went to work. Several of the Russian wives whose husbands had had to leave wrote letters that appeared in the Moscow papers. They denounced the United States and their husbands and asked for divorces. You know who made them do that.

One of the girls who hadn't seen her husband in a long time told me about her case.

"They just brought me the letter and told me to sign," she said. "There was nothing else for me to do."

Several of the wives disappeared, arrested by the secret police. All of the husbands that I knew did everything

humanly possible to get their wives out. But it was awfully difficult from the other side of the ocean.

One afternoon Tamara entered the apartment, tears in her eyes.

"I was taken off the street today," she said, "on the way to market. They took me to an apartment. They were nice. Oh, so very nice. And they told me I should divorce you."

"And what did you tell them?"

"I told them they could do with me what they wanted to, but I'd never divorce the man I love and the father of my two children."

I thought this was getting pretty serious. I went out to Spasso House and asked General Smith to come out in the yard for a walk. He and I knew his own residence might be wired for sound and if the M.V.D. knew Tamara had told me about this threat and I'd told the American Ambassador, well, I hate to think of what might have happened.

As we walked around the grounds, I related this latest development to General Smith. He's a very tough gent, as many people have learned, but I think I saw tears in his eyes.

"The dirty bastards," was his highly undiplomatic observation.

This is when the secret police were under the late L. P. Beria. I would like to think they are better today. If they are, they might release those wives and former wives of Americans and Britons who married them in Moscow.

In 1947 the Soviet Government passed a law whereby no Soviet citizen could marry a foreigner. That has been repealed by the present government.

The last years were rough on Tamara and the other Russian wives. They had no Russian friends. Tamara's mother, sister, and brother were forbidden to visit our apartment.

"It's a dangerous house," they were told.

Tamara was allowed to go to see them in their apartment (two small rooms), but I didn't see them for three years.

Tamara was no longer invited to receptions given by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Each time I received an invitation, I wrote my regrets and added that it was not the custom in my country to attend gatherings where other ladies were present without one's wife. She was never invited and I never went to another one.

Had it not been for my work—which was generally interesting—and the many wonderful friends we had in the diplomatic corps, I don't know what we would have done. To this I should also add Joe Commode and His Four Flushers. Beating that drum helped to keep me going too. But I had my private hell when I would awaken at six o'clock on those dark Russian winter mornings and think about my problem. It wouldn't have been so bad if I knew I had seven years to serve in Russia. Or seventeen before I'd get my family out. It was the uncertainty of the thing—the not knowing if you'd ever get them out that sometimes got me down. But I tried not to show it.

37

I received my first real frostbite from the cold war in the winter of 1950–51.

Years had passed since I'd been home. I needed contact with the United States and I wanted a rest. The New York office agreed. All I had to do was to get an assurance from the press department that, having left the Soviet Union, I could get back in again. There was no question of taking

Tamara and the two children with me. I had asked and asked about this, but I couldn't get Soviet approval. I wrote the chief of the press department and told him my plans and asked for an interview. After about a week, his secretary told me he would see me. I brought up the question of an exit visa for Tamara, Vicki, and Susanne. He looked at the wall behind me and made no comment. When I pushed him, he changed the subject. He agreed, at last, to take the matter up with higher authorities and try to obtain some assurance that I would encounter no trouble in returning to my family and work in the U.S.S.R. In three or four days, one of his assistants asked me to come to see him.

"You will have no trouble in getting your return visa," said Mr. Siminov, a small washed-out type, who reminded me of Uriah Heep. "But, please, be sure to go to the Soviet Embassy in Washington upon your arrival and apply for the visa. Don't wait until you are ready to return. I wish you a good trip."

I asked Siminov if the press department would allow me to send a telegram to my home office saying I had received this assurance that I could return. I wanted to tie them down as much as possible. He thought a minute and replied that he would let me know later. The following afternoon he said I could send the telegram. This I did, and after sad farewells to Tamara and the children, I flew off to Helsinki, Stockholm, and Oslo.

The journey home was most pleasant. Astrid Helgeby, the American-born wife of the Norwegian Ambassador in Moscow, was making the same trip. Returning to Boston to see her father. Aboard the *Oslofjord* we discovered the pretty young wife of one of the owners, if not the owner, of the Norwegian-American Line. In no time at all I met the cap-

tain. We made a most congenial foursome and I never sailed with a better master or on a finer ship. We certainly had a lot of fun. After the regular ship's band finished playing every night, a combination that we got up among ourselves took over. Often we played until dawn while eight or ten hardy souls stayed up to dance to our music.

The first thing I did in the U.S.A. was to fly to Washington and put in my application for a re-entry permit. I hoped to return on the *Oslofjord* Thanksgiving week. But, no visa.

"Well," I said to myself, "it's just taking time."

Astrid and the *Oslofjord* sailed without me. Thanksgiving passed, and then Christmas. Tamara would telephone me from Moscow and I would telephone her from the United States. We commenced to worry. I could get nothing out of the Soviet Embassy. Tom Whitney, who was holding down the job, in my absence, for the AP, could get no information from the press department in Moscow. I dared not believe I'd been tricked, but when New Year's Day came, I wondered.

My vacation was over. Frank Starzel, the AP's general manager, agreed that I'd better go to work in Europe. I was transferred to Paris, the title, "Bureau chief, Moscow, temporarily assigned to the Paris bureau."

When I got to Paris, I was met by Gaston de St. Merceaux, a very old friend, who was something akin to a lieutenant colonel in the French Air Force. Sandy is one of the most delightful people in the world, in addition to being one of the most gifted. With me, he shares a love of jazz music. The first night I was in the French capital he took me to meet Jacky, the extremely beautiful girl whom he later married. Then we went over to the Left Bank and had a reunion with an old friend, Sidney Bechet. Bech was playing in a cellar

joint, the Vieux Colombier. Backing him up on his glorious soprano saxophone was Claud Luter and his band. This group of French musicians included a man who could mash some amazing, though terribly loud, chords from a piano, and a young Greek, who played the drums and was known as "Mustache." I spent many a happy night in this place. But still—no visa.

I recall only with agony those telephone conversations with Tamara in Moscow, "Hoaney, when are you coming back to us?"

I dared not tell her the dreadful truth, that it might be never.

"Pretty soon now, Tomka. You just wait, darling. Everything's going to be all right."

"But, hoaney, Vicki and Susanna and I, we wahnt to see you so much—"

"I know it, Tomka, and I want to see you all very much. I'm doing everything I can. Now, listen, whatever you do, don't lose hope. I've always come back to you and I'll do it this time."

"I beleef you, hoaney. Gud-by. I luf you."

Sometimes she would bring Vicki and Susanna to the Central Telegraph (for they wouldn't let her talk to me over our apartment telephone) and the sounds of the little girls' voices begging me to come back to them was almost more than I could stand. I suppose that is one of the reasons I slept so little in Paris.

Preston Grover, an old friend from my Washington newspaper days, was the bureau chief in Paris. He treated me with the greatest consideration. I loved every member of that Paris bureau, the witty, cynical, and likable Bob Wilson, who will someday write one of the great books of our generation.

Harvey Hudson and his delightful Hungarian wife. That always good companion, Carter Davidson, and his Betty. The clever Carl Hartman and Martha. Onkle Charlie Lane and his family. Bargey Clarke, Joe Dynan, and Flip. Dear Claude and Vera. Vera, the White Russian girl, one of the most exceptional persons ever. Straight out of Dostoevski and as colorful as a flash of lightning across the great Russian steppe. And Angel, that warmhearted Spanish gentleman.

Fortunately for me, the Four Powers decided at this time to stage their ill-fated Council of Deputy Foreign Ministers. They met in the Palais Rose and it saw the return to Paris of another old friend, Charles E. (Chip) Bohlen, later to become Ambassador to Moscow and to figure so importantly in the affairs of my life.

Chip is a rare man, possessed of a fine sense of humor. He knows Russia and he knows Russians. Nothing depresses Chip and his language is very picturesque. For instance, instead of telling a press conference in dull diplomatic language that Mr. Gromyko, the Soviet representative, had finally revealed his position, Chip would say:

"Well, boys, Mr. Gromyko really came out from behind his fig leaf today."

My assignment was to cover the conference of the deputy foreign ministers as well as the Quai d'Orsay, the French Foreign Ministry. How I did the latter shall always remain somewhat a mystery to me, but I must have done it fairly well, for Harold King, Reuters' chief of bureau in Paris, and one of the great newspapermen of our time, once told Bob Wilson:

"That damned Gilmore didn't know ten words of French and yet he used to march up and down the halls of the

Quai d'Orsay browbeating officials and scooping a lot of people."

Harold can indulge in exaggeration. This was one of the occasions. But I always appreciated what he had to say. I know of no correspondent whose respect would mean more to me.

Another person who made my life easier in Paris was Elias McQuaid, press officer at the American Embassy. Mack (for how can you seriously call anyone Elias?) was a joy and a help. His observations of the human scene range from the sardonic to realms of high rhetoric and I have never heard him speak a dull sentence.

In connection with pleasant and entertaining people in Paris, I should certainly always include Art Buchwald, one of the funniest men alive, who writes a column for the Paris edition of the *Herald Tribune,* and David Schoenbrun, of C.B.S.

Living in Paris was also more enjoyable for the presence of such friends of long standing as the Italian Ambassador and Madame Quaroni, Cy Sulzberger, and Walter Kerr. And a great lady who was most kind to me, the Countess de Ganay.

One morning I was having coffee in the seventh-floor café of the Herald Tribune Building when one of the waitresses called me to the telephone. It was McQuaid from the American Embassy.

"Hold your hat," he began. "Somebody from the Russian Embassy just called the Embassy and asked us if we knew a man named Gilmore."

"Yes, go on."

"We told them we certainly did and this Russian guy said to tell you to come and get your visa to return to Russia!"

"Mack," I said, "you aren't kidding me?"

"No, Eddy. I wouldn't kid you about a thing like this."

In a daze, I walked downstairs to the AP office and told the news to Preston Grover.

"Eddy," he said, "I'm going to talk very frankly to you."

"Yes?"

"Don't you think you can do just as much to get Tamara and the children out of Russia by working on it from here?"

He paused.

"I hate to tell you this," he said, "but I'm afraid you are going to have to make a terrible decision someday if you go back now."

"Such as what?" I asked, although I knew what he was going to say.

"I'm afraid you're going to have to decide someday whether you are going to stay there permanently, or leave and never see your family again."

"You may be right, Pres," I told him, "but I don't think so."

"But don't you agree that you can help them just as much from here as you could from over there?"

"Maybe, Pres. Maybe. But——"

"But what?"

"Now that I have the visa to go back, well, I just couldn't ever live with myself if I didn't go back."

"Only you," he said, "would know about that."

"I know. I must go back, and the quicker the better."

Grover asked me to give him as much time as possible to replace me. We decided on a time period. I sat down at a typewriter and sent Tamara a telegram giving her the good news. As I was leaving the office that night, I received her reply:

I FEEL LIKE I HAVE BEEN BORN AGAIN. ALWAYS YOUR TAMARA.

38

With a very light heart, my few belongings, which included a portable phonograph and six bottles of Canadian Club which Elias McQuaid gave me, I left Paris on May 7, 1951, in my Hillman Minx for Moscow. I hadn't seen Tamara and the children for seven months. That was a long time.

How did I get the return visa?

The American Embassy in Moscow and the State Department in Washington, on a strong suggestion by Wally Barbour, then Minister-Counselor in Russia, worked out a plan.

The Soviets applied for a visa for a Russian correspondent to go to New York. Wally, with full backing from Washington, let the U.S.S.R.'s Ministry of Foreign Affairs understand that there would be no American visa for this Russian correspondent, or any other one, until there was a Russian visa for Gilmore.

Mine was forthcoming in about ten days.

I am convinced, and I've almost had positive proof, that it was not the press department that held up my visa, but L. P. Beria's secret police. I know the M.V.D. had to pass on every visa and they were holding mine in a dark pocket. When the State Department stiffened and talked tough, they gave in. After all, the Communists always want Soviet correspondents in America. For obvious reasons.

At Copenhagen I joined up with my friend Hans Moller, of the Danish Foreign Ministry. Hans had recently visited me in Paris, had gotten engaged, and was returning to his post in Moscow to fix up his apartment for his bride.

I had the little Minx. Hans drove a German Volkswagon.

We looked a sight. My 220 pounds on a six-foot frame in a tiny Hillman and Hans, all six feet, five inches of him, in the small Volkswagon. No stranger convoy ever left Copenhagen, and this includes some of the Viking voyagers.

My car rolled off the ferry onto Swedish territory first. I presumed Hans was behind me. A hundred yards up the street, I looked back. I saw him standing in the roadway, towering over a group of people. As I prepared to turn around, he drove up.

"One minute on Swedish soil," he said in a very injured tone, "and I'm damned if some Swedish woman doesn't run right into my car! I always have trouble with Swedes."

We looked the Volkswagon over. The damage was slight and I told him so.

"But," he explained, "the ignominy of being hit by a Swede and not being able to hit back."

"Come on, Hans, it's a long way to Stockholm."

In the capital of Sweden—one of my favorite cities of the world—I was able to crate the Minx and have it shipped to Moscow. There was no way of driving across the Gulf of Finland. And furthermore, if I'd ever reached Soviet soil, I had no permit to drive.

I took a plane to Moscow on the night of May 18 and was reunited with Tamara and the children. Tamara met me at the airport in the old Russian manner—with an armful of flowers, a great many kisses, and tears.

God, but she was good to see.

Vicki remembered me, and most fondly, and Susanna pretended she did.

"And now," I said to my wife, "let's start thinking about how to get out of here."

"Do you really think there's any chance?" she asked.

"Frankly, as long as Stalin is alive I just don't know. But this I do know. Something can happen in world affairs that can completely change the situation. It can change overnight."

It was nice seeing old friends and to know how kind they had been to my family. Lady Kelly told Tamara one night that any time she wanted to she could move with her children into the British Embassy.

"There," she said, "you will be safe. David and I will be delighted to have you."

I shall never forget this offer. It meant a very great deal to Tamara. Other people treated her as if she were their sister, or their daughter. If I live to be a hundred, I could never thank them enough, for the situation was a ticklish one.

I took up my work where I'd left off. We were nearing the stretch in the hate-America campaign. Ambassador Kirk was finishing out his term and George Kennan was to be the new Ambassador.

It was a dark, windy day when he stepped off the airplane at Vnukovo Airport. We shook hands warmly.

"I bring you a message from your friend Eddie Condon," said the envoy, whom I'd known for nine years. "He asks why you didn't tell him that I, the new Ambassador, was a pork-chop man."

A pork-chop man is a guitar player.

"Because," I told George, "I thought you were an Ambassador now."

"Yes, but still a pork-chop man. Have we still got one at the Embassy?"

I thought that a good beginning for an Ambassador.

George Kennan's tour of duty was during a tough period in Russia. The propaganda machine was really hotting up

the verbage against the United States. We were being denounced for bacteria warfare in Korea. Our soldiers accused of committing unmentionable tortures on Korean women and children. Truman and Acheson were fascist beasts. An American was a very low thing, indeed. Kennan walked into that atmosphere.

"Why, Eddy," he said to me one night, "even servants I've known for years treat me differently."

George Kennan, the Soviet Communists knew, was the author of the containment plan, the basis of our then foreign policy. They didn't like it and they didn't like him. He had many trying and irritating situations with which to deal. Investigations in Washington had thrown a fright into some members of his staff.

One evening, at the Finnish Legation, the Russian leader of the orchestra that was approved to play for foreigners approached me.

"Mr. Gilmore," he said, "do you know if the American Embassy is going to want us to play for New Year's? You see, the Polish Embassy has asked for us, and if you want us, I'd like to know about it now."

Despite the hate-America campaign, there was no question where the Russian band wanted to play—for the Americans.

"Just a minute," I said, "I'll ask one of the officers from the Embassy."

I spotted a high-ranking one and related my conversation with the Russian musician.

"Yes," he said, "we've okayed a dance for the American house. The boys will want them."

"Then please come over here and tell this fellow that you want him. I'll translate for you."

This State Department official looked as if I'd asked him to shoot his sister.

"I can't talk to him," he said in horror. "He's a Russian!"

He walked away very quickly.

I never have had a chance to ask George Kennan why he made the statement to a group of newspapermen that included Germans, on a Berlin airfield, that led the Soviets to announce they didn't want him as Ambassador any more.

In reply to a question, Kennan replied that life for an American in Moscow was much like it was for an American during the time he was interned in Germany.

George ought to know.

President Eisenhower's appointment for the difficult post was Chip Bohlen and it was a happy day for me when he stepped off the plane, as I had seen so many ambassadors step off, at Vnukovo Airport.

The new envoy hadn't been in Moscow a week when he said to me, "Eddy, I want you and Tamara to know that one of the first things I'm going to do over here is to try to get her out."

I didn't even bring up the subject. It was nice to have him introduce it.

"I promise no result," he added, "but I want you to know I'm going to bring it up at the highest level, and if need be, I'll continue to bring it up."

I looked him in the eyes. He was deadly serious.

"Thank you, Charles," I said. "I couldn't ask anyone to do more."

Shortly after this conversation, we were riding out through Moscow's suburbs.

"My, my," said the Ambassador, as he glanced at a clothesline, "I see the ladies still wear those same blue pants."

39

I'm convinced that the secret police once decided to get me and then changed their minds.

During my stay in Russia three American correspondents were forced out of the country:

James Fleming, of the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Anna Louise Strong, a free-lance writer, who'd at one time been on the Moscow *News*.

Robert Magidoff, a Russian-born American, who'd worked as secretary-translator for the Associated Press, then as the National Broadcasting Company's correspondent in the Soviet Union, and finally, as the correspondent for McGraw-Hill Publications.

In Magidoff's case, his former secretary denounced him as a spy in a letter to *Izvestia*. I knew this girl very well at one time and I knew she liked and respected Magidoff. The secret police, of course, forced her to write that letter.

I had two secretary-translators, Lydia Kleingal and Alyce Alexis. Lydia was the first to leave.

I took her home from work about two o'clock one afternoon, and in less than one hour and a half, she telephoned me at my apartment.

"Mr. Gilmore," she said in what was obviously a very frightened voice, "I must see you immediately. It's important."

"Why, of course, Lydia, come on over to the apartment. We are just having lunch."

In fifteen minutes Lydia was there. She was pale and nerv-

ous, something she hadn't been when I dropped her off at her home just a short time before.

"Mr. Gilmore," she began, "I am going to leave the Associated Press."

I looked at her closely. I thought a bit before replying. She had never even suggested resigning before. I knew she liked her work with us, for she'd been with me for about five years.

"What's the matter, don't you like your work any more?"

"It isn't that," she said in a small voice.

"Is it the salary you are getting? It's a very good one, you know."

"It's not that, either. Oh, I've just got to leave you, that's all."

"Of course, Lydia. If you must, you must. I believe I understand."

"Thank you. I hope you do."

She looked me straight in the eyes for the first time.

"Yes," I answered, "I know I understand now."

"I must leave you right away."

"When?"

"As of today," she said.

I knew the Soviet law on that one.

"Go back and tell them," I said, "that the Soviet laws say an employee must give two weeks' notice before resigning."

"Yes, it does say that, doesn't it?"

I asked her what she planned to do.

"I can't talk about that."

"Well, Lydia, you go back to them," (I emphasized the them) "and tell them you just can't quit like this."

"I'll let you know. Good-by." She got up and left.

The telephone rang an hour or so later.

"Yes," said Lydia, "it will be all right to work out the two weeks."

During the next two weeks, I learned that she'd been promised a job by "someone," doing translations much as she was doing for me. She said she would get good money and that she felt she'd be happy. But she didn't sound very convincing about this. The day she left she broke down in tears.

"I'm sure you understand," she said.

"I quite understand. Good-by, Lydia. It's been great fun working with you. You were always a good and loyal worker. Good luck."

She was crying quietly as she left our office.

A month later, from one of her girl friends, I heard what happened to Lydia. After she resigned, she remained at home, waiting for a telephone call from the people who'd offered her the new job. The call didn't come. She then began telephoning the someone who'd offered her the job. He stalled her. This kept up for several weeks. Then one night the terror came, as it comes to so many Russians. Between midnight and four in the morning.

There was a knock on her apartment door. Lydia lived with an invalid mother and a six-year-old son.

She opened the door. Two uniformed men and two plain-clothes policemen entered the room.

"Put on your clothes. Put on warm clothes. And pack yourself some warm clothes."

"But why? What is happening?"

"You will know in good time. Do as we say."

The child and mother looked on horrified as Lydia packed her belongings. Two of the men watched her every movement while the others searched her tiny room.

"But what will my poor mother and boy do?" she implored. "What will they eat?"

"Let them eat American food," said one of the secret policemen, with considerable sarcasm.

Lydia Kleingal was probably the hottest Soviet patriot I ever met outside the Communist party. She would argue with me for hours. I would point out the injustices of the setup in the U.S.S.R., and she would stubbornly shake her head and deny them. When I put arguments to her she could not refute, she would raise her head and say, "Well, I don't know why they do that either, but if they do it, it must be right, because they know what's best for the Soviet people."

"And you feel that way about your father? I know your father, once a good Latvian Communist, was executed by these people in the great purge. He was executed as a traitor."

Lydia bit her lip. Her eyes filled with tears.

"I'm sorry, Lydia. I shouldn't have said that."

She was the daughter of Latvian parents. Her father was all against the tsars. He was an old revolutionary. When he couldn't stand the tsarist rule any longer, he slipped away to America with his family. Lydia was born in St. Louis and lived there until she was seven. Came the Revolution in Russia and her father returned to Russia. Back to the promised land. He was given important work. And then, the purge of the 1930s. He was condemned to death and executed.

Lydia was no Communist, but she was the greatest apologist and defender of the system I ever met outside party ranks.

I missed her very much in the office and I was certainly sorry to hear the story of her arrest. I also thought that there was a good chance that a letter signed by her, denouncing

me as goodness knows what, might appear in one of the Moscow papers any day.

Alyce, the other secretary, worked on for several weeks before I received a telephone call one morning from her stepmother.

"Is Alyce there?" she asked.

"No, she hasn't come in."

"I'm worried. She left for her work and one of the neighbors saw her get into a big automobile with some men."

The woman telephoned several times that day. Alyce never showed up. And she never returned home. She'd been arrested, of course.

"Now, I said to myself, "they are sure to make a pitch for me. Both Alyce and Lydia will probably be forced to denounce me."

Yet, nothing happened.

Alyce was more of an American citizen than she was a Soviet citizen. Her parents were Russian-born, but they'd gone to the United States, as Lydia's parents had done. During the American depression of the late twenties and early thirties, Alyce's father had returned to Russia. He'd worked in a Ford factory near Detroit and the Soviet's young automobile industry welcomed him with open arms. He and his wife gave up their American citizenship and became Soviet citizens, but Alyce clung to her American passport.

When the Germans invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, the United States Government ordered all American women out of the country, Alyce included.

"It was either go back to America alone, where I knew no one," Alyce told me one day, "—and this meant leaving my mother and father in Russia, perhaps never to see them again —or staying on and violating the American order."

"What did you do?" I asked.

"I remained with my parents. We were evacuated to Uzbekistan."

"What did you do about your American passport?"

"Well, it just expired on me."

"But you had to have some kind of documents."

"Oh, yes," she explained, "the Soviet authorities gave me 'stateless citizenship' papers."

"Then you never actually became a Soviet citizen?"

"Oh, no. I still have my American passport. They told me over at the Embassy that they would validate it for me, but only as a document to return to the United States on."

She thought for a while and said nothing.

"I suppose I should have done just that when Mother died and Father remarried."

"Why didn't you do this?"

"I don't know. I had a job here. I didn't know if I could get one in America. I know no one there any more. I just drifted, I suppose you'd say."

About a year after Alyce disappeared, someone pushed a grimy envelope through the mail slot in my front door. It had my name and address written in Russian. I recognized the handwriting at once. It was Alyce's. I tore open the envelope.

"Dear Mr. Gilmore," she wrote, "I'm at a camp near Kirov. Won't you please ask the American Embassy to help me? Forever grateful, Alyce."

I took the letter to the Embassy. Previously I'd told them her story and about how she'd disappeared.

"I don't see what we can do," said a third secretary.

"My God, man, she's more of an American than a Russian."

"You've been here long enough to know we can't do anything," said the young man.

"Well, I think you should try."

Three or four months before we left Moscow, after Stalin's death, I saw Lydia on the street with her son. I didn't dare stop and speak to her, for this might have caused her trouble. I told the chauffeur to blow the automobile horn. He did. Lydia looked up and recognized me. She smiled and waved. Tamara saw her on one occasion after that. They had a few words. Lydia said she was all right and her mother and son were well. No reference was made, of course, to her arrest and release. She spent more than two years in prison.

I hope the Malenkov government will review, if it hasn't already done so, the case of Alyce. A very nice woman and as unpolitical as a Russian snowbird.

No letter denouncing me ever appeared in any paper that I know of. I don't believe this was because Lydia and Alyce were never asked to write them. They probably refused. They were both tough girls in a way.

The next time the hot breath of the secret police blew down my neck was during the winter of 1952. The hate-America campaign was going strong and the propaganda machine was making the best of the story of how the Americans spread bacteria in Korea and China.

I was alone in our new apartment, on the fifth floor of 13 Ulitsa Narodnaya, when there came a knock on the door. Tamara was at the market. The cook was out with little Susanna. Vicki was in school. I went to the door and opened it. The perfect secret-police type stood before me.

"Gospodin Gilmore?" he asked.

"Yes."

He walked into the apartment and began to take off his coat.

"This is probably it," I said to myself.

He was a big man. His hair was dark and his look matched it. He wore the same double-breasted blue overcoat the M.V.D. men wore. He even had on the blue serge cap. His shoes were tan, right out of the Central Department Store.

I motioned him to the living room and followed him. I showed him a seat and he took it. I sat down across from him.

"You wanted to see me?" I asked.

"Let me tell you who I am," he said. "I am a member of the Azerbaijanian Academy of Sciences. We are having a meeting here. That's how I happened to be in Moscow."

He paused and lit a cigarette.

"Do you remember Ivan Petrovich?"

"Ivan Petrovich?" I asked. "I don't believe so."

"Well, he remembers you," said my guest. "He remembers you and one of your American friends, a Dr. Waldron."

"Yes, I had a friend here named Dr. Waldron. He is in America now."

"No matter," said the visitor. "Ivan Petrovich is very ill. He needs some special drug. I have it here on a piece of paper. The name of the drug."

He fished in his pocket and brought out a neatly folded piece of paper and handed it to me. I didn't recognize the drug and told the man so.

"No matter," he said, "the doctor at the American Embassy will know it. Ivan Petrovich needs this drug, if he is to recover."

"And what am I supposed to do about it?" I asked.

"Ivan Petrovich wants you to get this drug from the American Embassy doctor. You give it to me and I'll take it to Ivan Petrovich."

"Why don't you get it from a drugstore?" I asked.

"I must confess," he said, "we don't have this drug yet. But you have it, you Americans. I'm sure the Embassy doctor has it."

"My friend," I replied, "in the first place, I have no authority to get drugs for you, Ivan Petrovich, or any other Soviet citizen——"

"But no one will know," he interrupted.

"I don't care about that," I said. "I couldn't do it and I'm sure the American Embassy doctor would not give American drugs to any Soviet citizen. He's not here to practice medicine on citizens of the Soviet Government. I'm sure your officials wouldn't like that. Anyhow, he wouldn't do it."

"But no one would know, Gospodin."

I explained again, and very firmly, that there was nothing doing. He kept on pleading and arguing. This went on for more than an hour. Mercifully, Tamara came home. I introduced her to my strange guest. He told the whole story all over again.

"And I have explained to him in my best Russian," I said to Tamara, "that I couldn't and wouldn't try to get this medicine. Now, you tell him in your best Russian."

She went over the same ground I'd been over. The man continued to argue.

"How did you know my address?" I asked.

"I asked at the Moscow Information Bureau."

I knew this was a lie, because I'd only just moved and I knew my new address had not been recorded.

"And how did you get past the policeman on the front door?" I inquired. "You know he stands down there to keep Russians from entering this building. Only foreigners live here."

He had a ready answer for this, too.

"Of course, I didn't know about the policeman. It was too late to stop when I saw him."

"But how did you get by him?" I persisted.

"Well, I just started talking Azerbaijanian to him," he said, "and he thought I was another foreigner and showed me into the building."

Dressed as he was—even if he didn't work for the secret police—this man could not have been mistaken for a foreigner. He was too much the Soviet citizen.

"Well, good-by," I said, "there's absolutely nothing I can do for you."

"Are you sure you cannot help me?"

"Absolutely sure."

"You think it over," he said. "I will pay you much money. Ivan Petrovich is rich now."

I shook my head.

"Not if you gave me a million rubles," I said.

He smiled.

"I might give you a million, at that," he said, with a joking laugh.

"Good-by."

"Good-by. I'll telephone you tomorrow."

"My telephone probably has a microphone attached to it. The police will hear your conversation," I told him.

"No matter," he said. "I'll telephone."

He did, too. The next day.

That afternoon I went to the American Embassy, looked up my good friend, Dr. Bruce Canaga, the Embassy's naval doctor, and told him the whole story.

"And suppose we'd given him that drug?" asked Bruce.

"If we'd given him the stuff," I explained, "I feel quite sure

that you would be accused of infecting that Ivan Petrovich and a lot of other folks with some terrible disease down in Azerbaijan. I would have been your accomplice. It would have fitted in perfectly with the bacteriological warfare story in the Far East."

"Brother," said Bruce, "I believe you're right."

"Just as a matter of information," I asked, "do you have that drug?"

"Yes," he said, "but I didn't know they knew I had it."

40

When I first arrived in Russia, I reached the conclusion that Russian women must have the best breasts in the world or the best brassières. Over the years, I discovered the first theory to be correct. I asked a Russian doctor about it one time.

"It's the bread," he said, "the black bread we have."

Maybe so. I'm not prepared to challenge his statement.

My four years in a Russian village taught me lots about the Russian female figure, for in all that huge country, I know of no factory manufacturing bathing suits. Consequently, I have seen some rare and bare sights.

I have seen girls and women in swimming with tops and no bottoms. With bottoms and no tops. And just as God made them.

I talked with Tamara about this after she'd returned from a trip to the Black Sea resort coast with a girl friend named Natasha.

She said just about all the swimming she saw and did was in the nude.

"But," she explained, "the women swam on one beach and the men on the other."

She related how a man photographer would stroll among the hundreds of naked female forms lying on the sand, seeking those who wanted their pictures taken.

"Did he get any business?"

"Plenty."

"What did the ladies do who were not having their photographs taken?"

"Oh, we would hide our faces," she explained.

Again, how completely Russian.

How did I get started on this subject?

Now, I'd always said that I wanted to be in Russia when Joseph Stalin died. And I was. I shall always remember the morning the story broke.

It was about 4:00 A.M., and I was awakened by the ring of the telephone.

"Mr. Gilmore," said a voice in Russian, "this is Tass (Telegraphic Agency of the Soviet Union). We should inform you that the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Comrade J. V. Stalin, is seriously ill."

That shocked me out of my half sleep.

"Will you repeat that again?" I asked.

I handed the receiver to Tamara and began pulling on clothes over my pajamas. I knew I had one of the greatest news stories in the world, for what name at that time could have demanded a bigger headline than Joseph Stalin, the grim dictator of two hundred million Soviet subjects and all their satellites? I know of none.

Tamara hung up. Her big brown eyes were as round as I ever saw them.

"It's true," she said, "Stalin is very seriously ill."

I quickly dialed Tom Whitney's number and gave him the news.

"Get to Tass as quickly as you can," I said, "and I'll meet you at the telegraph office."

I flew down five flights of stairs into the icy street below and set out to find a taxi cab. I lived a long way from the telegraph office—the place we had to go to send messages or make telephone calls to the outside world.

How small we mortals are! As I pounded up that icy street, I reduced this entire situation to how it affected me. I'm afraid this wasn't very Christian of me, but I said to myself, "Well, if Joseph Stalin is ill, I certainly hope it isn't anything trivial."

Though evil, Joseph Stalin was a genius, and death came to him as it does to all men.

I shall not be so foolish as to say I knew how or when he died, because I don't. I can only relate what I saw and heard.

The last time I saw this tough old Georgian alive was on November 7, 1952. It was at one of those monotonous Red Square parades, and as always, he appeared at the base of Lenin's red and black marble tomb in the Square just a few moments before the ceremonies were to begin.

Stalin wore his military uniform, the one he adopted during the war. He paused at the foot of a long flight of stone steps leading to the reviewing area atop the tomb. I was less than fifty feet away. He looked up the steps for a second or two and then started climbing them. He went up without hesitation and when he reached the top step, he paused, looked out over the boxes occupied by the diplomatic corps, the foreign correspondents, and a number of hand-picked Russians, probably all party members.

He raised his right arm and waved slowly. There was a suggestion of a smile on his leathery, pock-marked face. A rattle of applause greeted his gesture. Stalin turned and walked to his place on the reviewing gallery.

Behind him, single file, walked his colleagues and closest friends, L. P. Beria, Georgi Malenkov, V. M. Molotov, Nikita Khrushchev, Klementy Voroshilov, Nikolai Shvernik, Lazar Kaganovich, Nikolai Bulganin, Anastas Mikoyan, Mikhail Suslov, and a round assortment of marshals, generals and admirals of the Soviet Union.

He remained at his position for a very long time watching the thousands of soldiers and civilians pass beneath him, carrying banners on which his name was painted, huge portraits of his likeness, pennants spelling out the name of Stalin. All afternoon people trudged before him, shouting his name ad nauseam. Across the Square, directly in front of him, massive holiday decorations in red and white bunting fairly screamed his name.

Stalin seemed to like all this tremendously.

His next public appearance was to have been in the Bolshoi Theatre for the annual Lenin Memorial Meeting, January 21, 1953.

Foreign diplomats and correspondents are never invited to this gathering. It is a solemn Communist meeting always attended by Joseph Stalin and the other high dignitaries of the Party.

To cover this meeting, we set up recording machines in front of our radios—to make sure we got every word and got it correctly—and then did a running account of the speeches.

I thought I detected a difference in the volume and the length of the applause at every mention of his name. It didn't

seem to be as loud or as lengthy as in previous years, but it may have been my imagination.

The next morning, when the papers appeared, I knew I was right.

Those Moscow papers, for the first time that I could remember, carried no front-page pictures of the tribunal at the Bolshoi Theatre.

"Uncle Joe," I said, "wasn't there."

This was the first inkling that I had that something might be wrong with Joseph Stalin. Of course, there were always the usual rumors that he'd had a heart attack. That he was dead, and so on, but here seemed to be a real indication that something out of the ordinary had taken place. Stalin had not shown up for that meeting.

Now Joseph Stalin may have been desperately ill at that time. He could have been dead. Only time will tell about that but it is my belief that he was sick, too ill to attend the meeting, and that he got worse as time went on. When I received that telephone call, I believe the doctors and his colleagues realized that the end was at hand. It was then that they announced his illness. When they saw there was no chance of recovery.

A lot of thoughts went through my head that freezing-cold morning as I hurried up the icy sidewalks trying to find a taxi.

"This," I said, "is the story I always wanted to be in Russia to cover."

It didn't take too long to find a cab. A driver was asleep inside.

"To the Central Telegraph," I said, "and go through Red Square on the way."

The Kremlin's Spasski Gate opens on the Square. There's

usually a lot of movement around this particular entrance. The taxi finally reached Red Square.

I looked at the great, towering Kremlin, this city within a city. Right in the heart of Moscow. I saw cars coming and cars going out of the Spasski Gate. Every light behind the tall red walls seemed ablaze. A policeman hurried us on.

At the Central Telegraph there was real confusion. The place we had to work in was a room about twenty-five feet long by twelve feet wide. It contained three telephone booths for making long-distance calls, a few cheap wooden desks, and a pay telephone for local calls screwed to the north wall. A big window looked out on a Moscow side street. Portraits of Stalin, Lenin, and Molotov stared down from the high walls. Every Western correspondent was there, in the same room, beating out the story of Stalin's illness. We had an official Tass communiqué to go by and the censor was taking his time about passing our copy, which we sent in to him a paragraph at a time. The line was open to London, and as quickly as we got a paragraph through the censor, we telephoned it. The telephone bill alone that morning was in the neighborhood of seven hundred dollars. Granted. It was quite a story and once more Moscow Radio had broken the news to the world. Not that we didn't work fast enough, for we were sitting there with our telegrams written and already handed in to the censor. The trouble was, he, too, was sitting —sitting on our telegrams. When Moscow Radio gave the first news, then our copy began to pass. This was one of the heartbreaking features of working in the Soviet Union. Try as you may, the Soviets usually rigged it so that they beat you. Had there been no censorship and open lines to London, this would not have been the case. We proved this during the Council of Foreign Ministers Conference—when no censor-

ship supposedly existed on conference copy. Hour after hour we scooped the pants off Moscow Radio. And certainly with grim satisfaction on my part.

During the time they said Joseph Stalin lay dying, I made it my business to go through Red Square and around the Kremlin at least ten or fifteen times a day or night. You couldn't hesitate, or just stand there, for the police would move you on. During that time I saw automobiles filled with men in white going in and out of the Kremlin. I judged them to be doctors. I don't know, of course. But they looked to be doctors to me. On one occasion, I saw a car loaded with women in white I thought to be nurses. Again, I don't know for certain. And, on one occasion, I saw an open-bodied truck hauling what appeared to be oxygen tanks.

I shall not labor here with the details of those long sleepless nights we all spent at the Central Telegraph. No food for hours. No real sleep for days. To the eternal credit of every Moscow correspondent, he stayed on the job. Tempers became frayed and we cursed and screamed at one another. Several times there were near fights. The trouble was that telephone. There were only two lines to the West and there were six correspondents. Someone had to be last and everyone was trying to be first.

One evening I was riding through Red Square with Tamara, making my usual check. I saw something different. Instead of cars coming from the Kremlin and cars going into the Kremlin, there was no traffic. Instead, several hundred automobiles were parked around the base of the Kremlin walls.

"Wait a minute," I said to Tamara, "something's up. I think Uncle Joe has had it."

I told the driver to take me back to the Central Telegraph

and then to take Tamara home. I looked at my watch, as they do in the detective stories, and I saw it was just a few minutes before 8:00 P.M. The day was March 5, 1953.

What did all those cars parked around the Kremlin mean? It meant a big meeting was being held inside those walls. I am sure of this.

The following morning, between three and four o'clock, the Moscow Radio solemnly gave out this communiqué:

Dear Comrades and Friends: the Central Committee of the Communist party of the Soviet Union, the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R., and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. have with profound grief and sorrow to inform the members of the Party and all the working people of the Soviet Union that, after a severe illness, Joseph Vissarionovich STALIN, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R., and Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist party of the Soviet Union, passed away at 9:50 o'clock on the evening of March 5.

The heart of Joseph Vissarionovich STALIN, Lenin's comrade in arms and the genius who continued his cause, the wise leader and teacher of the Communist party and the Soviet people, has ceased to beat.

You will notice that this announcement gives the time of Stalin's death as 9:50 P.M. Two hours before 9:50 P.M., I saw no traffic going and coming from the Kremlin, but instead, several hundred automobiles parked there.

The boys were either meeting BEFORE Stalin's death to choose his successor, or something is very fishy about the entire thing.

As quickly as they could get it on the air, the bosses came out with the announcement that gave the big news of Stalin's

successor. It was Georgi M. Malenkov, and his first assistants were to be L. P. Beria and V. M. Molotov.

Moscow's diplomatic corps had many wise and gifted men and one of them was Mario di Stefano, the Italian Ambassador.

"Ah, Eddy," he said to me in his conspiratorial tone the morning Stalin's death was announced, "we have it all printed for us. Malenkov is No. 1 and Beria is No. 2. I just wonder if No. 2 isn't really No. 1. I feel he is."

"Then why wasn't he made No. 1 after Joe's death?"

"Because, my dear boy, Beria is a Georgian and Stalin was a Georgian. Not TWO Georgians in a row. Not even for the Russian people."

I saw he had a point and told him so.

"And, Eddy," he whispered in my ear, "look closely. Look closely. One of them must go. Both cannot live."

"You mean Beria is going to get Malenkov?" I asked.

"I think it's more likely that Malenkov will get Beria."

"You really believe this?" I asked him.

The Italian Ambassador is a short heavy man, with sparkling little eyes, red lips, and a wonderful imagination. He closed his eyes and lifted a martini to his mouth. He barely touched it before he sat it down and laboriously pierced one end of a Havana cigar.

"You will see," he said. "You will see. One of them has to go. And he has to go very soon."

In a situation where one has very few facts to go on, Mario di Stefano served the young Italian Republic well. In fact, I never met an Italian Ambassador who didn't. Three of the most outstanding diplomats I ever knew were Di Stefano, Quaroni, Ambassador to France, and Manlio Brosio, Rome's envoy to London.

41

The boys lost no time in putting Stalin's body on public view.

They hauled him out of the Kremlin one morning (I have a friend who took photographs of this) and transported him in an old blue truck to the Hall of Columns. Ironically, this building was the Noblemen's Club before the Revolution.

Never in my life have I seen crowds like the crowds that lined up for miles to pass by the body of Joseph Stalin. They extended, at one time, eight miles into Moscow's suburbs. I know. I counted them out by the speedometer on my automobile. And the lines were eight and ten people wide in places.

The whole thing was Byzantine.

A weighty scent lay over the large room in which Stalin's flower-bedecked coffin lay. An orchestra of nearly a hundred pieces, thirty-two of them violins, filled the room with music. Thirty or forty spotlights and Kleig lights beat down on the scene. Guards with fixed bayonets every four or five feet. Flowers. Real and artificial. Thousands of them. And the body itself, dressed in a light khaki military uniform, the arms not crossed over the chest, but extending stiffly, parallel to the body.

Stalin's face was a strange yellow, not brown. You could barely detect the pockmarks. His hair had been shampooed and obviously tinted, for it was mostly brown and Stalin had been gray and balding for a long time. The mustache was thick and brown and his cheeks were rouged.

The most singular thing about this man, I thought, was his

hands. I was surprised, for I thought they would be square and heavy. They were not. They were small and the fingers finely tapered. His left arm, as we all know, was withered, but there was little difference in the two in the slightly large military tunic. I was also struck by the largeness of his nose and the big open nostrils. Even in death, his face was arrogant.

I went through this room on three different occasions. I saw some people crying. I saw a few sniffling, but the vast majority showed no expression at all. I am convinced that most of them came down there to get close to a man in death whom they could never approach in life. And to make damn sure he was dead.

Joseph Stalin was a terrible and difficult man and I feel that even his closest colleagues were not sorry to see him go. As to the Russian people, I am certain that they were relieved. The death and the suffering that this man caused them was monumental. He controlled their very lives. He showed them no sentiment. His grip was like icy iron. He drove them, he threatened them, he punished them, and he executed them, but he never led them. He was a latter-day Ivan the Terrible, doing much for his country, but leaving a bloody trail of broken bodies and hearts as he dragged the massive, sad country along. He wasn't a Russian. He was the sulky son of a drunken Georgian cobbler and a highly religious, superstitious, and sweet mother. But he understood the Russians. Better than they did themselves.

Without a free press, free radio, or virtually any discussion at all, the Russian people have an amazing facility for knowing what's going on among the top party brass.

Joseph Stalin was hardly dead before his survivors began changing things around. They altered the entire government

and party setup that Stalin had ordained after the last party Congress in the autumn of 1952. And they switched a lot of other things.

One story swept the city of Moscow. I think I heard it five times in a single day. It aptly illustrates my point about the Russian people knowing what's going on at the top.

The story:

Malenkov called all his ambassadors and ministers back from foreign lands, assembled them in the Kremlin, and said, "Comrades, I made a bad decision when I announced that Comrade Stalin would be buried in Moscow. No, that cannot be. We must bury him in a foreign country. Where can this be done? I appeal to you."

He was greeted by silence.

"Have none of you a suggestion?"

Silence.

"What about you, the Ambassador to France?" asked Malenkov.

"Oh, no, Comrade Malenkov. You see the instability of the French governments. We could never get them to let us bury Comrade Stalin in France."

"And what about you," Malenkov continued, "the Ambassador to Italy?"

"You see what's happened to de Gasperi, Comrade Malenkov. We could never get it done there either."

The former Soviet Minister to Israel stood up.

"Comrade Malenkov, I know we don't have relations with Israel right now, but I understand they are to be resumed. When, and if, they are resumed, I feel certain that we can bury the body of Comrade Stalin in Israel."

"Yes," said Malenkov, "we do plan to resume relations with Israel. And you believe you can get the body buried there?

"I am sure I can."

"Then I shall send the papers around to you, we shall open up negotiations for resuming relations with Israel, and then we'll have him buried there. Comrades, that is all, you can go."

The envoys rose to leave.

Malenkov suddenly clutched his head in his hands.

"Comrades, comrades, please be seated again. I have made another mistake. I suppose it must be the press of so much business, but, comrades, Israel is the one country in the world where we simply cannot bury the body of Comrade Stalin."

"And why not?" asked the former Soviet Minister to Israel.

"Because," said Malenkov, "don't you remember? It happened a long time ago, but there was a fellow who died down there named Jesus Christ and he rose from the dead in that land. No, comrades, we can never take the chance of such a thing happening again. Israel is out!"

42

The day of Stalin's funeral arrived.

I got the car out the night before and rode all over Moscow and far into the suburbs. All of the downtown section of the city had been roped off since the body was put on view in the Hall of Columns. Uniformed policemen, hundreds of them on horseback, kept back the crowds. Sometimes the situation threatened to get out of hand. I saw the crowds break through the police lines in several parts of the city. The policemen beat them back with clubs, and on two occa-

sions, I saw them ride horses over screaming men, women, and boys.

Malenkov, Beria and Company were taking no chances. They acted as if they didn't know what might happen with Stalin gone.

People openly criticized Stalin and the government.

"Stalin was too much I, I, I," a Russian man said to me on a side street. "He didn't know how to get along with the Americans. It's good that he's gone. What this new group is going to do, God of mine, who knows, but it probably won't be good for the people."

Out in the suburbs I saw company after company of soldiers. There were even tank companies and artillery groups. From what I could see with my own eyes, I would estimate three or four divisions were drawn up outside the city in readiness for trouble.

The funeral procession began at the Hall of Columns, where Georgi Malenkov, L. P. Beria, V. M. Molotov, the rest of the Politburo, and Chou En-lai, the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs—who'd arrived ostensibly for the ceremonies —carried the strange coffin out into the cold, windy street.

Those who were running things had erected on the coffin a sort of celluloid dome over Stalin's shoulders. As the body moved along the street on a gun carriage, you could recognize the dead man's features from the sidewalk.

The funeral was strictly by invitation. The streets were still roped off and the thousands upon thousands of curious Muscovites were held back several miles from the Kremlin and Red Square.

Tamara and I, with our black-bordered invitations and our passports, arrived early to miss nothing. We were dressed warmly, for the day was cold and gusty. As usual, we had to

go through three or four lines of uniformed security police before we reached our seats. At each line a policeman studied our invitations, then our documents, and then our faces. But they were very polite. This was a change.

"Do you notice," I asked her, "how polite they are today? They even salute us and say 'Thank you.' "

"Things are changing," Tamara answered.

We took our places in the front row of our box, just beside the red and black tomb that today bore two words—red on black:

LENIN
STALIN

We saw a number of Russian officials we knew. They bowed. Several shook hands with me. This was something new too, for they'd been grimly formal during the hate-America campaign and the days leading up to Stalin's death.

"Look at them, they're smiling," said Tamara.

"The new look," said I.

N. G. Palgunov, the director of Tass, tipped his hat from an adjoining box. I tipped mine back.

Off in the distance we heard the first strains of Chopin's funeral march. I think it possesses some of the noblest brass phrases in music. Up the hill into Red Square, just to the south of the Historical Museum, came the procession. And what an odd one it was.

The black horses pulling the gun carriage on which lay Stalin's strange coffin, the red flag draped over its foot. The celluloid blister over his head and shoulders. The easily recognizable, but too yellow, rouged face. Behind the body trudged Georgi Malenkov, Beria on one side and the Chinese Chou En-lai on the other. And ranged out on their flanks, the

big mules of the Communist party. There behind them I recognized Lieutenant General Vasily Stalin, the dictator's son, and Svetlana, Stalin's daughter. Marshal Semyon Budenny, with whom I'd sung songs and joked, walked alone, holding a red silk pillow. On the pillow lay Stalin's orders and medals.

The band played on and the procession reached the tomb. After a slight delay, the Politburo and Chou En-lai removed the coffin and took it inside the Lenin-Stalin tomb.

Svetlana and Vasily glanced about them with hesitation. No one showed them to seats. They eased over to the north side of the tomb, just in front of where we were standing.

How very unusual, I thought.

Something was going on at the base of the tomb. I recognized Malenkov and several others. They mounted those same steps that I'd seen Stalin go up four months before. Malenkov led the way. He was followed by Beria and Molotov and Voroshilov and Bulganin. They reached the top and moved to the microphones at the spot where Stalin used to view the holiday parades.

Malenkov was the first to speak. He eulogized Stalin. His voice was calm and showed no emotion.

Beria spoke next. His Georgian accent was worse, I thought, than Stalin's. He, too, showed no emotion.

Then Molotov took the microphone.

"Tovarichi," he began, and his voice broke in a sob. He had to begin again. He broke down several times during his speech and showed grief and emotion all the way.

"I'm not sure," I said to a diplomat beside me, "whether he's sobbing for Stalin or for himself."

I looked closely at the figure in the uniform of a Soviet marshal standing on the tomb's tribunal. I knew this man well.

"Will you give me your glasses for a moment?" I asked a lady beside me. "I must be sure about something."

I raised the glasses to the figure's face.

There was no doubt about it. It was Marshal Georgi Zhukov, banished to the wilderness of the Odessa Military Command by Stalin after the war, and now back in Moscow, as Deputy Minister of Defense under the new Malenkov government. And—on Lenin's tomb with the mighty once more.

A good sign, I thought.

Marshal Georgi Zhukov was the only real hero of the Russian people to come out of the war. He also seemed to get along with General Eisenhower reasonably well in Berlin. He was Eisenhower's official host when the supreme commander visited the Soviet capital after the war. I remembered how they stood there together, atop Lenin's tomb, and reviewed the Physical Culture Parade, and how later they went to the Dynamo Stadium and watched a football game. And how a hundred thousand football fans cheered Eisenhower and Zhukov.

"The new look," I said to myself.

The band played its last note. The final speech had been made. The funeral of Joseph Stalin was over. The musicians, lined up in front of the tomb, came to attention at a signal. The leader's arm cut a circle through the air. The band struck up a marching song. It was very nearly a gay and lilting tune. Certainly nothing funereal about it.

The King is dead. Long live the king.

Joseph Stalin was very dead. Malenkov and others descended from the reviewing stand. They chatted among themselves.

I looked down at Vasily and Svetlana. They were talking to one another. Vasily offered his sister a cigarette. She shook

her head. I saw her smile. He lit up and puffed some smoke into the March air. A man in civilian clothes walked up, shook hands with both of them. After a moment or two of conversation, young Stalin and his sister followed the man. I lost sight of them as they passed beyond the tomb.

An official of the protocol section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs walked up to the diplomatic box and asked some of the diplomats if they wouldn't like to go down in the tomb.

There was a singular sight. One of the great unexplainables of an unexplainable land.

The Lenin Tomb is the holy of all holy places in the U.S.S.R. Today, with the body of Joseph Stalin beside the badly embalmed body of Vladimir Lenin, it should have been all the more holy.

There was nothing in the tomb but the two bodies, except over against one stone wall stood a small wooden table, monumentally out of place. And on it sat a half-empty vodka bottle and two empty glasses.

If I knew who'd been down in that tomb, drinking what toasts and to whom, I might have the answer to a great many things about Russia today.

The people were leaving Red Square. Not sorrowfully, though. The March wind moaned through the tall fir trees between the tomb and the high crenelated Kremlin wall, a fitting sound for the end of Joseph Stalin's story.

43

I handed my pass to the Supreme Soviet to a guard stationed at the Kremlin gate. He looked it over, saluted, smiled, and waved me inside this ancient onetime home of

the tsars, then commissars, Generalissimo, and now, Georg Malenkov.

An old Russian saying, "The Kremlin stands over Moscow, and over the Kremlin stand only the stars."

I walked slowly between the buildings until I reached the oblong structure that was once the Great Hall of St. Andrew —throne room of the tsars. Now it's the meeting of the Supreme Soviet, one of the largest rubber-stamp factories in the world.

"No" or "I object" are as unknown in the Supreme Soviet as a baseball game would be in the Park of Culture and Rest. Greater unanimity than that which features every session of the Supreme Soviet (Russia's Congress) is hard to imagine.

I went inside and gave my overcoat and fur hat in at a counter marked "Press." A uniformed officer of the security police whom I'd been meeting at public functions for years showed me to an elevator. As it rose to the third level, the press gallery, I recognized a familiar American name. The elevators in the Kremlin—or at least this one—had been built in the U.S.A.

Only one person was sitting in the box reserved for foreign correspondents. I recognized him at once as a secret policeman in plain clothes. He was the same fellow I'd seen in the foreign correspondents' press box many times before.

Cy Sulzberger once punched this man in the ribs and asked in his best Russian, "What newspaper do you write for?"

The policeman did not answer, but he blushed furiously. I was tempted to say something to him today, but I refrained. Today's story promised to be a good one. I didn't want to get pitched out of the Kremlin.

I was an hour early, but already the delegates to the Su-

preme Soviet's two houses—the Council of the Union, and the Council of Nationalities—were filing in. I watched them closely for familiar faces.

The huge elevated platform, with its rostrum, its special box seats, and its benches, was empty. This was the exact spot where the throne once stood and where many a Tsar was crowned. Beneath me was the floor of the Supreme Soviet, where the members had their desks and their chairs.

Already I recognized a number of generals, marshals and admirals. I saw Timoshenko, Zhukov, Koniev, Govorov, Andrianov, Vasiliev, and Kuznetsov. And then I recognized Vyshinsky. He was just below me.

The last time he'd been in this hall, he'd been Joseph Stalin's Minister of Foreign Affairs. But one of the first things the Malenkov government had done was to demote Vyshinsky to Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Soviet's representative at the United Nations. He no longer sat on the elevated platform at the end of the room. He was down among the delegates from Tadzhikistan.

Vyshinsky, the hatchet man and mouthpiece of the U.S.S.R., is no old Bolshevik. On the contrary, when the Revolution took place, Andrei was a Menshevik. A member of the opposition party.

Mr. Vyshinsky is a fast-running back and very tricky in the open field. He can feint and he can dodge and he can certainly tell which way the Communist wind is blowing.

He has been a faithful stooge for his Communist bosses for many years. He has sent hundreds of his fellow countrymen to death by vigorous prosecutions, although, in the spirit of fairness, I suppose I should say that probably no matter who prosecutes the accused of the Soviet Union, their fate is decided before they ever come to trial. However, Vyshinsky

gives every appearance of pleasure as he sends them to their certain destruction.

"I don't mind Vyshinsky," an American Ambassador once told me, "because he knows that you know when he's being a son of a bitch."

Andrei Vyshinsky must have a fine mind. I believe he's one of the greatest cynics in the Soviet Union. He simply sings for supper, dinner, and luncheon, and he works like hell doing it. No man labors longer hours than this Soviet citizen of Polish origin.

At the tail end of World War II, the British and American ambassadors in Moscow and Mr. Vyshinsky were dispatched by the three governments concerned to Bucharest to supervise the "first free Rumanian elections."

They made the trip from the Soviet capital to the Rumanian capital—only a few months before it was freed of the Germans—in a special Russian train. Averell Harriman, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, and Andrei Vyshinsky each had a special railway car to themselves and their assistants.

I got this story from one of the two ambassadors.

There were several parties on the train, as it slowly moved towards Bucharest, and the wine flowed freely, as did the conversation between Harriman, Clark Kerr, and Vyshinsky.

"Mr. Vyshinsky," one of the envoys asked after dinner, between the champagne and the cognac, "what do you think would be the result of we held really free elections in Rumania tomorrow? I mean what percentage of the votes would the Communists get?"

Vyshinsky replied without hesitation.

"If we held free elections in Rumania tomorrow," he said, "the Communists would get about 20 per cent of the votes cast, but—with just a little pressure, we'd get 99 per cent!"

I cite this story to show a portion of Mr. Vyshinsky's cynicism.

Whenever Andrei Vyshinsky is in the presence of the mighty mules of the Communist party, I always amuse myself by watching his performance. The man has no pride. He bows and scrapes before them and runs and trots about them like a little dog around his master.

But, at this special session of the Supreme Soviet, to which Vyshinsky had been summoned home from New York, the old gray rat was playing it safely. He knew he'd been demoted from Minister of Foreign Affairs to Deputy Minister and he gave the impression of trying to find a quiet foxhole until he could find out what gave. He spoke to no one and no one spoke to him. I don't think those Tadzhiks recognized him. He was back near the end of the hall, directly beneath me.

The hall filled up and then—just as in Stalin's days—the Politburo filed onto the platform at one minute before 2:00 P.M. Georgi Malenkov led the way, as Stalin used to lead the way.

The King is dead. Long live the King.

L. P. Beria, the chief policeman, came next, and then V. M. Molotov.

The delegates burst into applause at the sight of Malenkov. They scrambled to their feet and beat their hands together. Malenkov looked them over for a while and then sat down. This was the signal for the applause to stop. It did.

The Chairman of the Moscow City Soviet opened the session by introducing L. P. Beria. He was greeted by loud applause. Beria then nominated Mr. Malenkov for the post of Chairman of the Council of Ministers, the job Uncle Joe held. It is, in effect, the post of Prime Minister.

Beria heaped praise on Malenkov during his nominating speech and then asked if there were any objections to the nomination. Throughout history, a more superfluous question has never been asked. There were no objections. All in favor. The delegates rose to a man. Malenkov was in.

He rose from his chair. I was surprised, as I had been surprised before, when I saw this short fat man in motion. He had that peculiar grace that some fat men have. He didn't waddle. He wore a brown semi-military jacket, buttoned up under his triple chin. Neither the jacket nor his long baggy trousers looked as if they'd ever seen a presser.

His hair was thick, long, and black, and a lock kept falling over one eye as he talked. His very black eyes, staring out of the round fleshy face, are the most singular feature of this man.

He spoke in a loud clear voice. His diction was good, and his language was that of an educated man. Georgi Malenkov is easily the best public speaker in the Soviet Union, and I've heard a lot of them.

Midway through his address, he said that there were no problems, including those with the United States, which could not be solved peacefully.

That was all I needed to hear. I knew I had the gist of Mr. Malenkov's speech of acceptance. I hurriedly checked over my notes with Tom Whitney, told him to stay on and cover the rest of the speech, and then left the press box.

I took the elevator, hastily gathered my fur hat and coat, and did a quick exit from the building. It was a Sunday afternoon and I knew the long-distance telephone room at the Central Telegraph was full of "democrats." That's what we called the Bulgarians, Poles, Rumanians, Koreans, Chinese, Albanians, Hungarians, and Czechs who flocked in on Sun-

days to telephone Bucharest, Sofia, Peiping, and God knows where else. The rates are cheaper on Sundays and the visitors from the "Countries of the Peoples' Democracies" really take advantage of them.

As I neared the Kremlin gate, I could hear footsteps behind me. It was the opposition, of course. When they saw me leave, they left.

Kolya, my driver, saw me coming from his parked position. He wheeled the car into the traffic and I stepped off the sidewalk into the machine.

"The Central Telegraph," I said, "and fast."

Kolya lost no time.

I picked up my portable typewriter from the back seat and knocked out a bulletin on Georgi's statement—that there were no problems, including those with the United States, that could not be solved peacefully.

I was concerned at this moment only with what he said. It was Malenkov's first public pronouncement since he took office. Moscow Radio was not broadcasting this speech. I knew I had a story. When we stopped at the Central Telegraph, I had pounded out my first fifty words. I raced up the stairs and handed them to the girl behind the window. She took them in to the censor.

I was right about the "democrats." They were all over the place, speaking eight different languages at once. I growled at a Chinese sitting at my desk and he got up hurriedly. I flung down my typewriter and, working from notes, began typing out the rest of the story. I had the feeling that one gets after being in the newspaper business for a while, that I had heard Mr. Malenkov make his real point of the day, and that everything else he had to say was incidental. Fortunately, this proved to be correct, and because of well-laid plans con-

cerning the car and typewriter—and speed afoot—the first bulletin on Malenkov's speech went to the AP about ten minutes ahead of any other bulletin.

The foreign correspondent's business is a strange one. I've said that before. Ten days later, when I read the AP's account of Malenkov's first speech as Premier, somebody else's by-line was on my story. My name appeared over an eyewitness account of how Malenkov was dressed, and so on.

Heigh-ho, it all adds up in the end.

44

Tamara and I were invited to the Netherlands Embassy for luncheon one Saturday. We found a number of other guests there, including the American Ambassador, Charles E. Bohlen, and his pretty wife, Avis.

The meal was good, the talk was fine, and when it was time to go home, the Ambassador suggested that we join him and the Ambassadress in a game of deck tennis in their side yard. It seemed a fine idea and we lingered.

"I can play only a couple of sets," said Bohlen, "because I've got an important appointment."

An important appointment for an Ambassador in Moscow usually meant a meeting at the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Chip played several sets and then called me aside.

"Molotov has asked to see me," he said. "If there's anything, I'll let you know."

I forgot all about it and went on back playing deck tennis, a game at which I do not exactly excel. At last, fatigued, we said good-by to the host and hostess and went home. I fin-

ished up a few things in the office and lay down and turned on my bedside radio to hear the last BBC news.

The telephone rang. I recognized Bohlen's voice.

"Eddy," he said, and his tone was grave, "can you come over to Spasso House right away?"

Such a request in Moscow sounds ominous.

"Is it bad news, Charles?" I asked.

He seemed to wait an eternity.

"It ain't bad, kid," he said at last.

I hung up and ran for my hat. It was a nice summer day. The sun was shining and a good dinner was in store for us, for we were invited to the British Minister's and one always ate well at Paul and Agnes Grey's.

I dared not think why the Ambassador had summoned me so quickly to his residence. I just wouldn't let myself believe that this might be the news that Tamara and I had been waiting for for seven long years.

"Seven long years in the wrong country," I used to say to myself.

I had released our driver until eight o'clock in the evening, so, once again, I had to find a taxi. The driver was one of Moscow's lady taxi drivers. I gave her the directions to Spasso House and, when we arrived, instructed her to wait for me.

I found Chip Bohlen pacing the floor of the blue room. Robert Tucker, head of the Press Reading Service—an outfit the American and British embassies had set up to translate daily the Soviet press into English—was sitting in a chair.

"I've just come back from seeing Vyacheslav," said the Ambassador. ("Vyacheslav" is Molotov's first name.)

"Yes?"

"Well, boy, you're sprung. Tamara gets her visa."

You could have knocked me over with the Kremlin cannon.

"Say that again," I asked him.

He did.

"I suppose," he laughed, "you need a drink."

He handed me one.

I sat down and looked at Tucker.

"Yes," said the Ambassador, "Tamara and Zhenia (Tucker's Russian wife) both get their visas."

At this point, Mrs. Bohlen rushed into the room. She'd just heard the good news. She looked terribly happy.

"Congratulations," she fairly shouted.

"I've, I've," I began, "I've got to kiss someone."

"Well, honey," she answered, "here I am."

The American Ambassadress was bussed without protocol.

I turned to the Ambassador.

"Thank you, Charles. Thank you very much for all you've done."

"Don't thank me," laughed Chip, with characteristic modesty. "A wooden Indian could have done what I did. Thank whatever it was that took Joe Stalin away."

"Now, who but Chip Bohlen," I asked myself, as I returned to the taxi, "would have made a remark like that?"

Getting the Russian wives out of Russia with their American husbands was the first thing Charles Bohlen dedicated himself to doing. Other envoys had tried unsuccessfully before him. He'd done it. Don't talk to me about wooden Indians. Talk to me about Charles E. (Chip) Bohlen.

Outside my apartment house I tipped the lady taxi driver five dollars. She looked as happy as if the American Ambassador had just gotten her an exit visa.

Back in the apartment, I shouted for Tamara.

"She's gone to the market, Gospodin," said the cook.

"When's she coming back?"

"She didn't say, Gospodin."

"She never does."

Bohlen had asked me to tell the news to Tamara only, for he'd only just sent a telegram about it to Washington. Tamara wasn't home. I was fairly bursting with my secret.

After several years, she entered the apartment.

"Tomka," I said in English, "Chip has just been to see Molotov and you get your visa!"

She didn't say a word, but staggered backwards into the children's empty room and collapsed in an armchair.

"I'm in a dream," she said. "Don't wake me up."

45

Those remaining days in Russia were among the most pleasant I ever spent anywhere.

There were many, many farewell parties. We attended eighteen in a row, up to and including the night before we left. We enjoyed them all.

One of the best was an all-day picnic staged by the Argentine Ambassador, Dr. Leopoldo Bravo, a friend of some seven years. It began at 11:00 A.M. at the Ambassador's *dacha*. All night long the night before, the Argentine Minister and the rest of the staff barbecued the meat. In the open, as they do in Argentina.

When I arrived, a band was playing on the lawn. A volleyball game was in progress. Another group was swatting a badminton bird. Still others were throwing horseshoes. Some people were dancing and the drink was flowing.

It was a great day, with many toasts.

As the sun set across the Muscovy plain, I noticed the dean of the diplomatic corps, Rolf Suhlman, the Swedish Ambassador, and the Finnish Minister, Cay Sundstrem, carrying one of their colleagues to the car. The colleague's legs moved, but it was only a gesture. He had run out of power.

I am always proud of my Russian wife. I was proud and pleased for her one Saturday afternoon during the semi-finals of the European Basketball Championship, played in Moscow during the summer of 1953.

The young Italian team lined up before the veteran Soviet team. The setting was the gigantic Dynamo Stadium. Over fifty thousand spectators looked on.

The Soviet captain walked to the center of the stadium. The Italian captain met him there. The Italian handed the Russian leader a pennant, a souvenir of Italy. The Soviet captain gave the Italian leader the biggest armload of flowers I ever saw. They shook hands and rejoined their respective teammates. All eyes were on them.

I noticed the Italian captain, Carlos Cerioni, hold a brief consultation with his players. Then he turned and ran across the end of the stadium, dashed up the aisle between twelve rows of spectators to where Tamara and I were sitting with the American Ambassador and Mrs. Bohlen, the American Minister-Counselor and Mrs. Jacob Beam, bowed deeply, and presented the flowers to my Russian wife. She held out her hand and the tall blond Italian kissed it, as I'm told only an Italian and a Frenchman can kiss a hand.

A group of Soviet photographers rushed up and flash bulbs went off in the summer air.

"When they identify Tamara," said Bohlen, "that's one picture that won't get on the front page. America," he added, "isn't that popular, yet."

Tamara's face was the color of her red linen suit.

"God of mine," she said to herself in Russian, "for whom do I cheer now?"

Olga Lepeshinskaya, the ballerina, was sitting about twenty feet away. She looked at Tamara, smiled, and waved.

"The new look," I said again. "Lepeshinskaya hasn't smiled at Tamara in years."

How did Carlos Cerioni, the Italian captain, know my Russian wife? He met her at a big diplomatic reception the night before. She became the "sponsor" of the Italian team from then on. The Italians won but a single game in the semi-finals and finals. However, the game was the greatest upset of the championships. In it the Italians defeated the great French team by one point and thereby knocked the French out of second place. Tamara cheered them to the last basket. Not that she loved the French less. She just loved the Italians more.

Our final good-by party was at the Pakistan Embassy. This building was just around the corner from where Tamara's mother, sister, and brother lived. At midnight we quietly left the party and went to say good-by to the nice, kind people, whom I must have caused a great deal of trouble by marrying their daughter. But if I did, they never referred to it and they never showed me anything but loving kindness.

I hadn't seen them for three years until I stood before Tamara's mother that night. She held an icon in one hand and blessed us with it.

"You have my blessing, my son," she said in Russian. "I give you my daughter and my granddaughters. Go with them, and may God be with you all."

We returned, a little sad, to the Pakistan Embassy, where

the party was still raging. And it raged until almost dawn and time for us to rush home and close our suitcases for the airplane trip to Helsinki.

I did not go around to the press department, or to anyone at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to thank them for letting my wife and children leave with me. I was grateful and I am grateful to everyone who had anything to do with it, but I refuse to consider our release an original act of Soviet charity. It was something that should have been done years ago. It didn't cost them anything to let a wife go with her husband and children to his work in another land. No, it was just another one of those little things that the Malenkov government is doing. It's part of the new look and I hope too many people in various parts of the world do not attribute it to a complete change of heart on the part of Mr. Malenkov. Until I see evidence to the contrary, the same old Communist goals are there, carry-overs from the Stalin regime.

A good-sized crowd was out at the airport the following morning to say good-by, and the crowd included some of the best friends I've known anywhere. There were kisses, handshakes, and tears, but at last, I led Tamara and Vicki and Susanna out onto the field and into the Soviet airplane. I literally kept my fingers crossed, for I still wasn't out of the worker's paradise.

The door of the plane was about to be shut when I heard a loud commotion and my name. I turned and I saw the short squat figure of Elio Pascerelli, the accordion player in the last band of Joe Commode and His Four Flushers, puffing up the aisle, pushing Soviet officials aside.

"I just made it!" he gasped.

He told us all good-by, and just as the airport people were

about to eject him from the plane, he threw his arms around me and kissed me on both cheeks.

The door closed. The plane rose off the ground at Vnukovo Airport, where Tamara and I had seen so many friends leave Russia. The plane left Moscow far behind and we landed briefly in Leningrad. I knew we were but a few minutes from the Finnish frontier. I still kept my fingers crossed. We got back in the plane. The motors roared and we were off the ground. We headed over a corner of the Gulf of Finland and it wasn't long before I sighted Helsinki. We came down and got out of the plane.

I stooped and picked up a handful of Finnish soil.

"What are you doing?" asked Tamara.

"Nothing," I said.

I'm afraid this was awfully hammy of me, but I couldn't help raising that soil to my lips.

In less than an hour, we were on a neat, beautifully operated plane of the beautiful Scandinavian Airlines, being served a beautiful luncheon by a beautiful Swedish stewardess.

"Look," I said to Tamara, "she smiles."

I thought of the poor girl on the Soviet plane who'd had to leave it at Leningrad. They wouldn't let their stewardess, or whatever they call her, land in Helsinki.

"Will you fasten your seatbelts," said the Swedish girl in perfect English, "we are about to land at Brömma Airport, Stockholm."

"Lady," I said, "we certainly will."

I would like to finish this book with the list of people who were extremely kind to us in Moscow. I can never thank them enough for the things they did. Such persons as Chantal

Goffin, the wife of the Belgian Ambassador; Ruth and General Mike O'Daniel; Nellie and Admiral Leslie Stevens; General Russell Randall; Sir David and Lady Kelly; Captain Ivan Sarrell; Teresa and Robert Ford, the Canadian chargé d'affaires; Baron and Baroness van Pallandt; the Prince and Princess Thomas Ypsilanti; Taj and Sikhu Baig; Hans and Ursule Moller, of the Danish Legation; Harriet and Captain Willy Edenberg, of the Swedish Embassy; Gary and Pete Schuman; Alyce and Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas de Tolly; Germaine and Yong Pholubon, the Thailand chargé d'affaires; the French Ambassador and Madame Louis Joxe; Sergeant Albert Cove, of The American House; Colonel and Mrs. Frank James; Richard H. Davis and Fred Reinhart; the Egyptian Minister, Anis Azer; Wally Barbour; Marjorie and "Blake" Blakeney; Agnes and Paul Grey; Admiral and Mrs. Kirk; General and Mrs. Smith; George and Annelise Kennan; Colonel and Mrs. Michael Prynne; Colonel and Mrs. Philip Hawes; those United States naval doctors and dentists, Ralph Fielding, Eugene Walsh, Griff Edwards, Robert Vaughn, Miller Cosby, Bruce Canaga, and their wives.

And certainly, last but not least, my very warm friends, Lieutenant Colonel James Norwood and Maurene; Major Thomas B. Johnson and Billie; Major George van Laethem and Regina, and two lovely girls from the American Embassy, Gael Hodgkins and Kay Stover.

The list is too long. It could go on and on for pages. Those people will probably never know what their friendship and kindnesses meant to me and my Russian wife.